AFRO BAROMETER

Afrobarometer Paper No.8

VIEWS OF DEMOCRACY IN SOUTH AFRICA AND THE REGION: Trends and Comparisons

by
Robert Mattes, Yul Derek Davids
and Cherrel Africa

A comparative series of national public attitude surveys on democracy, markets and civil society in Africa.

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POLITICAL REFORM IN AFRICA

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Co-Editors: Michael Bratton, E. Gyimah-Boadi, and Robert Mattes

The Afrobarometer Series, launched in October 1999, reports the results of national sample surveys on the attitudes of citizens in selected African countries towards democracy, markets and other aspects of development. The Afrobarometer is a joint enterprise of Michigan State University (MSU), the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA) and the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD, Ghana). Afrobarometer papers are simultaneously co-published by these partner institutions. The objective of the Afrobarometer is to collect, analyze and disseminate cross-national, time-series attitudinal data for up to a dozen new democracies on the African continent.

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Views of Democracy In South Africa and the Region: Trends and Comparisons

Robert Mattes, Yul Derek Davids, Cherrel Africa

Executive Summary

The Question

By almost any standard, South Africa's new political system fully qualifies as a genuine democracy. It has now run two largely peaceful national elections judged to be free and fair. It is about to conduct its second set of local government elections. It has what is widely seen as a "state-of-the-art" Constitution with innovative features like the National Council of Provinces, a range of independent watchdog agencies and commissions, guaranteeing a wide range of classic political rights as well as an array of socio-economic rights, all guarded by a relatively strong Constitutional Court.

Freedom House, the relatively conservative and critical international watchdog of democracy and civil liberties, defines South Africa as "free" meaning that it is judged to protect a full range of political freedoms and civil rights. This, combined with his judgement that South Africa provides genuine political competition, has prompted international democracy analyst Larry Diamond to go so far as to call South Africa a "liberal democracy" (Diamond, 1999).

But a Constitution, relatively well run elections, and stable elected representative institutions do not complete the democratic picture. Regardless of how well designed its political institutions and processes, a sustainable and consolidated democracy requires people who are willing to support, defend and sustain democratic practices. In other words, a democracy requires democrats; it requires citizens. As Richard Rose and his colleagues have recently argued, if political institutions are the "hardware" of a democratic system, what people think about democracy and those institutions constitute the "software" of that system. And as all systems designers know, software is just as important as hardware (Rose et al, 1998, p. 7).

Internationally acclaimed scholars of democracy Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan (1996) argue that regardless of the quality of political processes and institutions, a democracy is only consolidated once it is "legitimated," or seen by all significant political actors and an overwhelming majority of citizens as "the only game in town."

Thus, the key question for the consolidation of South Africa's young democracy is: does the country possess a sufficiently critical mass of citizens sufficient to support, sustain, and defend the institutions of popular self-government?

The Survey

This Afrobarometer Series report focuses on results from a recently completed survey of a random, disproportionate, stratified nationally representative sample of 2,200 South Africans. The survey was conducted by Research Surveys (Pty)Ltd. from 6 July to 6 August 2000. Research Surveys interviewers travelled to 550 randomly selected sites around the country during this period to conduct focussed interviews with respondents, who themselves were randomly

selected at those sites. Interviews were conducted in the preferred language of the respondent. Interviewers were only sent into a region if they were fluent in all languages likely to be required for interviews.

This survey was the seventh and last of the first round of the cross national survey research project known as the Southern African Democracy Barometer (SADB). This project and the larger research consortium are coordinated by the Public Opinion Service of I*d*asa (the Institute for Democracy In South Africa). The goal of the Southern African Democracy Barometer is to assess the prospects for consolidating the region's existing democracies as well as fully democratising its remaining pseudo-democratic multi-party systems. It does this by examining citizens' attitudes on democracy and its alternatives, their evaluations of the quality of governance and economic performance, perceptions of the consequences of democratic governance on people's everyday lives, and information about a range of actual and potential economic and political behaviours.

Earlier surveys were conducted in Namibia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Lesotho in late 1999 and early 2000 and the results released in July of this year.

The Findings

Results from the South African segment of the 1999-2000 Southern African Democracy Barometer illustrate a wide range of obstacles and challenges to democratic development in South Africa.

While South Africans exhibit modest levels of support for democracy, overall support levels have not increased in any substantial way over the past five years, and they also lag significantly behind that found in many of its neighbours.

Across a range of indicators, South Africans' assessments of their political institutions and leaders are becoming more pessimistic.

South Africans also compare poorly to their neighbours in terms of their interest and participation in democratic politics.

All of this illustrates that during South Africa's first five years of democracy, its democratic culture failed to move to that higher plane that could help consolidate its new democratic regime. In one sense, the processes of bargaining and negotiation, of constitutional design and institutional innovation have left the people behind. This suggests a need for renewed emphasis on civic education which teaches the value of democracy as well as equips citizens with the resources necessary to participate more fully in the political process. Perhaps more importantly, these findings underscore the need to think creatively about reinvigorating or reforming South Africa's representative institutions in order to give people greater incentive to become involved in the political process.

Attitudes Toward Democracy

Across a range of different indicators, South Africans are much less supportive and committed to democracy than citizens of neighbouring countries.

- South Africans exhibit the greatest awareness of the concept of democracy in Southern Africa. They have a largely positive understanding of the concept.

- When unprompted, they spontaneously see it as the realisation of individual rights and civil liberties.

- However, when given a list of possibilities, South Africans are much more likely to emphasise the realisation of socio-economic outcomes as crucial to democracy than they are the key procedural components such as regular elections, multi-party competition or freedom of speech.

- While the average South African supports democracy, national levels of support are modest at best, and certainly much lower than several other countries in the region.

- And while the average South African rejects a range of non-democratic alternatives to ruling this country, citizens of the rest of the region's multi-party systems reject these alternatives with greater frequency and strength of opinion.

- However, most South Africans feel their elections are free and fair, and that their system of government is wholly or largely democratic.

- Large majorities also feel that they enjoy much more rights and freedoms since 1994 than under *apartheid*.

- By widespread margins, South Africans give much more positive evaluations to the present democratic system than to *apartheid*, but there are gradual increases in a certain "nostalgia" of the way the country was governed under *apartheid* especially among white, coloured and Indian respondents. And while South African widely prefer what they have now to what they had before, their optimistic hopes of how they would be governed in the future have declined noticeably.

These findings may surprise some, given the long popular struggle against white minority rule. However, the fact that the profile of South African responses parallel those of Namibians, and that both differ significantly from citizens in Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe suggests a provocative hypothesis. That is, Africans who have lived under the yoke of indigenous authoritarian government (e.g. Banda, Kaunda, and Mugabe) have learned to attach an independent and intrinsic value to democracy that has not yet been widely developed in Nambian and South Africa.

Evaluations of the Political System

Across a range of assessments of their political system, South Africans' are becoming more pessimistic. South Africans now put significantly less trust in elected institutions, see them as less responsive to public opinion, and are less satisfied with their performance than the last time I*d*asa asked these question in late 1998.

- A widespread sense of legitimacy for South Africa's political institutions is not yet present.

- Elected, representative institutions enjoy less trust than more purely state institutions.

- Only minorities of citizens feel that their elected representatives are interested in what they think or want.

- Relatively high levels of perceptions of official corruption still exist, though they have not increased since 1998.

- However, perceptions of corruption are only tentatively linked to actual experience; the extent of actual experience with official corruption is far lower than perceptions of corruption.

- Approval of the job performance of South Africa's political leaders and institutions is significantly down; there are indications that much of these declines have taken place very recently.

- Satisfaction with government performance across a range of specific issues has also decreased across the board.

- Citizen priorities for government action remain largely the same with large majorities citing job creation and fighting crime as the most important problems facing the country.

- For the first time, significant numbers of citizens now cite HIV / AIDS as one of the country's most important problems.

Democratic Citizenship

South Africans rank quite poorly in terms of their interest and participation in democratic politics. Compared to other citizens across the region, South Africans:

- Have the highest levels of access to political information through various forms of news media.

- At the same time, they are significantly more informed than their neighbours when it comes to awareness of important national leaders.

- They have one of the most active records of protest participation.

- Yet they are relatively disinterested in political affairs and exhibit a low sense of citizen efficacy.

- They do, however, retain a general sense of the efficacy and effectiveness of voting and elections.

- While they have a strong record of protest participation, South Africans are the least likely to take part in most forms of civic participation, and among the least likely to take part in political participation.

- They have very low levels of actual contact with government leaders or with other influential community leaders.

Views of Democracy In South Africa and the Region:
Trends and Comparisons

Robert Mattes
Yul Derek Davids
Cherrel Africa

I
Introduction

By any standard, South Africa's new political system fully qualifies as a genuine democracy. It has now run two largely peaceful national elections judged to be free and fair. It is about to conduct its second set of local government elections. It has what is widely seen as a "state-of-the-art" Constitution with innovative features like the National Council of Provinces, a range of independent watchdog agencies and commissions, and replete with a wide range of guarantees of classic political rights as well as a wide range of socio-economic rights, all guarded by a relatively strong Constitutional Court.

In fact, Freedom House (a relatively conservative and critical international watchdog of democracy and civil liberties) defines South Africa as "free" meaning that it is judged to protect a full range of political freedoms and civil rights. This, combined with his judgement that South Africa provides genuine political competition has led international democracy analyst Larry Diamond to go so far as call it a "liberal democracy" (Diamond, 1999).

But a Constitution, relatively wel-run elections, and stable elected representative institutions do not complete the democratic picture. Regardless of how well designed its political institutions and processes, a sustainable and consolidated democracy requires people who are willing to support, defend and sustain democratic practices. In other words, a democracy requires democrats; it requires citizens. As Richard Rose and his colleagues have recently argued, if political institutions are the "hardware" of a democratic system, what people think about democracy and those institutions constitute the "software" of that system. And as all systems designers know, software is just as important as hardware (Rose et al, 1999, p. 7).

Internationally acclaimed scholars of democracy Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan (1996) argue that regardless of the quality of political processes and institutions, a democracy is only consolidated once it is "legitimated," or seen by all significant political actors and an overwhelming majority of citizens as "the only game in town."

The Southern African Democracy Barometer

Does South Africa possess a sufficiently critical mass of citizens sufficient to support, sustain, and defend the institutions of popular self-government? I*d*asa's Public Opinion Service has concentrated on providing answers to this question since 1994. More recently it has also joined forces with six other national research partners from across the

region in a project known as the Southern African Democracy Barometer (SADB) designed to address this question on a cross-national basis. The SADB consists of national research teams led by Mogopodi Lekorwe (University of Botswana), Thuso Green (Sechaba Consultants, Lesotho), Stanley Khaila (Centre for Social Research, University of Malawi), Christiaan Keulder (Institute for Public Policy Research, Namibia), Neo Simutanyi (Institute for Social and Economic Research, University of Zambia), and Annie Barbara Chikwanha.-Dzenga (University of Zimbabwe).

The goal of the Southern African Democracy Barometer is to assess the prospects for consolidating the region's existing democracies as well as fully democratising its remaining pseudo-democratic multi-party systems. It does this by examining citizens' support for democracy conceived not as a set of favorable attitudes toward democratic practices, but rather as a choice made by citizens in favour of democracy over its alternatives. Thus, the citizen does not necessarily need to possess favourable pre-dispositions toward elections, free speech, or multi-party competition; rather they only need to choose democracy and its key constituent elements as preferable to alternative regime types. This is what Richard Rose has called the "Churchill Hypothesis" (Rose et al, 1999) stemming from Winston Churchill's famous dictum. Churchill called democracy the "the worst form of government," but then added "except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time."

Thus, SADB surveys measure public attitudes on democracy and its alternatives, evaluations of the quality of governance and economic performance, perceptions of the consequences of democratic governance on people's everyday lives, and information about a range of actual and potential economic and political behaviours.

Beginning in September 1999, SADB national research partners conducted systematic surveys of scientifically chosen random stratified nationally representative samples of 1,200 respondents each. The first survey began in Namibia in September 1999 and by the end of the year, we had completed surveys in Zimbabwe, Botswana, Malawi and Zambia. In early 2000, we completed a survey in Lesotho. And most recently, I*d*asa commissioned Research Surveys (Pty)Ltd. to survey a nationally representative sample of 2,200 South Africans in July / August 2000.

We anticipate that the results of these surveys will provide elected representatives, policy makers, democracy advocates and scholars with crucial information about the present state and future of democratic governance in Southern Africa. And by allowing Southern Africans to define their own regional democratic norms, the project should provide ordinary people a voice independent of politicians,' traditional leaders' and journalists' assertions about public opinion.

The Southern African Democracy Barometer contains a wide range of data much of it not contained in this report. This report is the second publication of results from the SADB and focuses on key findings about South Africans' support for democracy, their evaluations of their political systems, and their views and behaviours with regard to the demands and duties of democratic citizenship. It also draws comparisons between South

Africa and the rest of the region. However, it is a preliminary, largely descriptive discussion of the results. Future papers in the Afrobarometer Series will mine the data more thoroughly, drawing links between South and Southern Africans' views with the increasingly large volume of opinion data from around the world, and capture the complex linkages among people's attitudes or between their attitudes and the broader socio-political environment in which they live.

II.
South Africans' Attitudes Toward Democracy

As we have argued elsewhere, measuring the extent to which democracy is legitimated requires the analyst to assess at least three different things. First of all, we need to measure the extent to which people are committed to key component features of a democratic regime. Second, we need to understand the extent to which people choose democracy as a regime form against its alternatives. Finally, we need to understand what people understand democracy to mean (Mattes et al, 2000).

Thus, the Southern African Democracy Barometer measures a "Churchillian" type of support for democracy in three ways. First, we attempt to measure the degree to which South Africans think a political regime called "democracy" is preferable to other regime types. Second, we assess what people understand by a regime called "democracy?" And third, we measure the extent to which people support constituent elements of democracy against their alternatives (without using the word "democracy").

Popular Support for Democracy

We begin by reporting the responses to a question that has been widely used by opinion researchers in Southern Europe and Latin America. It asks respondents to express a general choice or regime form by offering three options. First, democracy is always preferable to any other kind of government. Second, under certain circumstances, a non-democratic form of government could be preferable. Or third, it really doesn't matter to a person such as themselves (see the ensuing table for actual question wording).

In July / August 2000, six-in-ten (60%) South Africans agreed that "democracy is always preferable." Thus, the average South African supports democracy. Yet the overall levels of support do not compare well with popular support for democracy as measured by this question in other new democracies. It is slightly lower than levels measured in new democracies outside of Africa. For comparison, the mean scores for six Eastern and Central European countries surveyed in 1995 was 65 percent, and for four Latin American countries, 63 percent (see Mishler & Rose, 1998: 13; and Linz & Stepan, 1996: 222).[1] And when set against its neighbours in Southern Africa, popular support for democracy is lower than that of four other countries: Botswana (82%), Zambia (74%), Zimbabwe (70%) and Malawi (66%).

Just over one-in-ten South Africans (13%) express a preference for authoritarian government. Possibly of greater concern, two-in-ten (21%) are agnostic toward the question of whether the country should be democratic or not, agreeing with the statement "For someone like me, a democratic or non-democratic regime makes no difference." Along with the inhabitants of Lesotho this is the highest in the region.

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[1] Except where noted, cross-national averages, or means are calculated as the raw mean of aggregate country percentages. This has the effect of weighting each country sample as if it were the same size and are not corrected for the country's population size.

Support for Democracy Across Southern Africa

	Botswana	Zim	Zambia	Malawi	Lesotho	Namibia	South Africa
Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government.	82.4	70.5	74.0	65.5	38.7	57.7	60.0
In some circumstances, a non-democratic government can be preferable to democratic government.	6.7	10.7	8.8	21.6	11.0	11.7	12.9
For someone like me, a democratic or non-democratic regime makes no difference.	5.6	13.1	12.3	10.8	22.7	11.6	21.0
Don't know	2.5	4.7	4.0	2.2	23.9	19.0	6.0

When compared to the last time I*d*asa asked this question, in November 1998, support for democracy has remained stable across the overall population. The most important racial differences seem to occur with regard to acquiescence or apathy. 36 percent of Indian and 27 percent of Coloured respondents say the form of regime makes no difference to someone like themselves (compared to 21 percent overall) and an additional 18 per cent of Indian respondents say they do not know which form of government is best (as opposed to 6 percent overall).

Support for Democracy In South Africa

	1998	2000
Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government.	63	60
In some circumstances, a non-democratic government can be preferable to democratic government.	13	13
For someone like me, a democratic or non-democratic regime makes no difference.	20	21
Don't know	3.2	6.0

Support for Democracy (by Race)

	November 1998	July / Aug 2000
Black	67	63
White	59	48
Coloured	48	59
Indian	54	35

% "Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government

The Southern African Democracy Barometer included a second question asked by I*d*asa over the last few years in South Africa that is meant to tap a relatively deeper level of commitment to democracy. The item asserts that "sometimes democracy does not work" and then asks whether, when this happens, democracy is still best or a strong, unelected leader would be preferable? What "does not work" means was deliberately left unspecified in order to allow people to fill in their mind whatever it means to them for a system of government "not to work."

When democracy is said to be "not working" 55 percent of South Africans remain committed to democracy as "the only game in town" and just over one-third (38%) would opt for a strong, unelected leader. Again, while the average South African expresses this relatively deeper level of commitment to democracy, overall levels of agreement are

much lower than in Zimbabwe (74%) and Botswana (65%), though higher than in Namibia (43%) and Lesotho (34%) where pluralities would actually opt for authoritarian government in such a situation. It is approximately the same as in Zambia (54%) and Malawi (59%).

Commitment to Democracy In Southern Africa

	Botswana	Zim	Zambia	Malawi	Lesotho	Namibia	South Africa
Democracy Always Best: Agree / Strongly Agree	65.4	73.9	54.3	58.6	34.1	42.7	55.1
Need Strong Leader Agree / Strongly Agree	29.1	19.0	29.5	40.2	41.8	50.0	37.5
Don't know	4.1	4.8	1.7	0.1	10.0	7.3	4.4
Agree With Neither (Volunteered)	1.0	1.8	1.7	0.0	11.6	0.0	3.0

Sometimes democracy does not work. When this happens, some people say that we need a strong leader who does not have to bother with elections. Others say that even when things don't work, democracy is always best. What do you think? With which statement to you agree with most: Need strong leader; or Democracy Always Best?

As measured by this item, the proportion of South Africans committed to democracy has held relatively steady in a range between 45 and 55 percent since 1995. There has been more variation over time within racial groups, with black respondents generally expressing the highest levels of commitment, and white and coloured respondents exhibiting lower and more fluctuating levels of commitment. Since 1997, Indian South Africans have consistently been least committed.

Commitment to Democracy In South Africa (1995 to 2000)

	1995	1997	1998	2000
Democracy always best: Agree / Strongly Agree	47	56	47	55
Need Strong Leader Agree / Strongly Agree	43	30	38	38
Don't know	10	14	15	5
Agree With Neither (Volunteered)	NA	NA	NA	3

Sometimes democracy does not work. When this happens, some people say that we need a strong leader who does not have to bother with elections. Others say that even when things don't work, democracy is always best. What do you think? With which statement to you agree with most: Need strong leader; or Democracy Always Best?

Commitment to Democracy (by Race)

	Sept / Nov 1995	June / July 1997	November 1998	July / Aug 2000
Black	46	61	49	60
White	46	39	43	36
Coloured	35	53	44	52
Indian	54	27	33	33

What Does "Democracy" Mean?

The average South African supports democracy. But what do people mean when they say: "democracy is preferable to any other form of government"?" What is it that about democracy that makes it preferable to other regime forms? What is their "picture in the head" of democracy (Lippmann, 1922)?

The first way we attempted to get at this question was to simply ask people: "What, if anything, do you understand by the word 'democracy'? What comes to mind when you hear the word?" Although the questionnaire and interview was always conducted in the local language of the respondent's choice the actual word "democracy" was always presented in English.[2] Respondents were free to offer answers in their own words. Rather than trying to fit diverse interpretations into a narrow set of predetermined categories, we transcribed all answers verbatim and coded the responses after the fact. We did this especially because we did not want to overlook any distinctive meanings that South Africans might attach to democracy. We particularly wanted to avoid an imported, Western-oriented conceptual framework that might crowd out any indigenous interpretations.

Awareness of the Term "Democracy"

First of all, South Africans exhibit a very high level of recognition and awareness of the term "democracy." It is a recognisable concept to nine-of-ten South Africans (91%) that we interviewed, the *highest* level of recognition measured in the region. In the other six countries surveyed, an average of almost three-quarters of all respondents (72.7%) was able to volunteer a definition of the term.

Awareness of the Term "Democracy Across Southern Africa

	Botswana	Zim	Zambia	Malawi	Lesotho	Namibia	South Africa
Able To Supply Meaning	71.1	80.9	77.0	86.7	54.6	65.7	91.0
Don't know / Cant Explain / Unable to explain	22.0	17.4	17.2	7.8	41.5	26.9	9.0
No Response	6.9	1.7	5.8	5.5	3.9	7.4	0.0

Awareness of the Term "Democracy (by Race)

	Black	White	Coloured	Indian	Total
Able To Supply Meaning	92	93	84	75	91
Don't know / Cant Explain / Unable to explain	8	7	16	25	9

However, while the ability to provide some definition of democracy is widespread, it is somewhat "thin." We allowed respondents to give up to three responses to this question, and less than one-half the sample (47%) were able to provide a second definition, or understanding, and just one-fifth (19%) could provide a third. At the same time, these levels are far higher than in the rest of the region where we conducted surveys. On average, only one in five respondents (21%) across the rest of the region ventured a second definition, and only one in twenty (6%) provided a third response.

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[2] In Namibia, Oshivambo interviews used the recognised word *oDemocracy*. Only in Botswana did we use a translation because the national research partners felt that people were more likely to be familiar with the Setswana phrase describing democracy.

Thus, while there is widespread recognition of the term, people involved in designing or providing democracy and civic education in South and Southern Africa should not overestimate the depth of awareness or complexity of understanding of the concept.

Ability to Provide Multiple Definitions of Democracy

	Botswana	Zim	Zambia	Malawi	Lesotho	Namibia	South Africa
Able to Supply A Second Meaning	27.6	20.3	14.9	22.8	8.3	29.1	46.9
Able to Supply A Third Meaning	7.6	5.8	1.8	7.5	1.0	9.1	19.2

Ability to Provide Multiple Definitions of Democracy (by Race)

	Black	White	Coloured	Indian	South Africa
Able to Supply A Second Meaning	50	39	34	35	47
Able to Supply A Third Meaning	21	12	12	4	19

Positive or Negative Connotations of "Democracy"

Besides their awareness of the concept, what do South Africans think about "democracy"? Do they have a negative or positive understanding of it? In order to address this concept, we took respondents spontaneous responses and coded them according to whether they conveyed a positive, negative, or neutral / null connotation.

First of all, virtually all South Africans who can supply some meaning to democracy do so with some positive connotation. 92 percent can provide an understanding of democracy, and 84 percent provide a positive meaning. At most, 2 percent have a negative view of democracy. This pattern holds true across the region.

Positive – Negative Perceptions of Term "Democracy"

	Botswana	Zim	Zambia	Malawi	Lesotho	Namibia	South Africa
First Response							
Positive Meanings	68.8	69.6	72.1	82.9	45.2	65.1	84.0
Negative Meanings	0.4	0.3	0.9	0.9	0.7	0.3	0.0
Null / Neutral Meanings	1.9	11.0	4.0	3.0	8.7	0.3	1.5
Other							4.4
Second Response							
Positive Meanings	27.3	19.8	14.7	22.4	7.3	29.1	42.1
Negative Meanings	0.2	0.3	0.0	0.1	0.3	0.0	0.1
Null / Neutral Meanings	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.7	0.0	0.1
Other							3.3
Third Response							
Positive Meanings	7.6	5.7	1.8	7.4	0.8	9.1	16.1
Negative Meanings	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0
Null / Neutral Meanings	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.3
Other							2.0

What, if anything, do you understand by the word "democracy"? What comes to mind when you hear the word?

Positive – Negative Perceptions of Term "Democracy"

	Black	White	Coloured	Indian
First Response				
Positive Meanings	86	83	80	75
Negative Meanings	0	0	0	0
Null / Neutral Meanings	1	4	1	0
Other	5	5	2	0
Second Response				
Positive Meanings	45	38	32	36
Negative Meanings	0	0	0	0
Null / Neutral Meanings	0	0	01	0
Other	4	1	1	0
Third Response				
Positive Meanings	19	12	11	6
Negative Meanings	1	0	0	0
Null / Neutral Meanings	1	0	0	0
Other	2	1	2	0

What, if anything, do you understand by the word "democracy"? What comes to mind when you hear the word?

Interpretations of "Democracy"

Besides the positive or negative valence attached to the concept of democracy, what exactly do South Africans think it means? Is it broadly similar to the growing international consensus that has emerged since 1989, or do they exhibit a peculiar type of understanding? Those writers, analysts and observers who have posited the existence of a peculiar, African understanding of democracy have tended to suggest two sets of alternative mental frameworks to western emphases on elections, institutions and individual rights. One school has argued that Africans see democracy as a quest for equalising social and economic outcomes in which political procedures such as constitutions and multiparty elections are mere formalities (see Ake, 1996). Another school has argued that in the post-colonial period, Africans understand democracy as a form of collective freedom of the new nation from European colonial rule (see MacPherson, 1967). In South Africa, the argument would be slightly amended to a form of collective freedom from white minority rule (at least for black, coloured or Indian respondents). Personal freedoms and rights would be seen to be much less important than national independence and rule by the "people" seen collectively.

These arguments find mixed support from the respondents answers. When unprompted, South Africans overwhelmingly see democracy in political and liberal terms. The spontaneous response of 70 percent of respondents pertained to civil liberties and other personal freedoms. Similar levels of emphases on civil liberties were expressed in Malawi (79%), Namibia (72%) and Zambia (65%). South Africans also resemble the rest of the region in the emphases they give to popular control over government (15%), as well as voting and elections (12%).

However, they differ from the rest of Southern Africa in the frequency with which people define democracy in terms of equality and justice (26%). An additional 7 percent say that democracy means social or economic development. Thus, while South Africans do have

a largely political (rather than economic) understanding of democracy, they are more likely than other Southern Africans to hold a view of democracy that encompasses important aspects of equity and development.

There is little sense of some unique understanding of democracy as collective freedom from racial domination (only 0.6 percent of respondents spoke of a sense of independence, and just 0.2 percent of respondents described democracy as some sort of group-based freedom). At the same time, one can see a strong reverse image of *apartheid* in these responses. Especially for black respondents, every reference to rights, freedoms, equality and justice could be seen as a reference to what they were deprived of under that regime. But what seems clear is that the more salient aspect of the end of *apartheid* seems to be the chance to obtain the personal dignity and freedoms provided by equal citizenship, rather than any specific economic outcome.

Understandings of the Term "Democracy"

	Botswana	Zim	Zambia	Malawi	Lesotho	Namibia	South Africa
Positive Meanings							
Civil Liberties / Personal Freedoms	29.6	30.2	64.5	78.7	17.4	71.6	70.3
Government By the People, For the People, Of the People	33.7	15.9	12.0	5.3	21.3	3.3	13.6
Voting / Electoral Choice / Multi-Party Competition	8.0	5.6	7.6	14.2	0.4	10.4	12.2
Peace / Unity	18.7	8.2	2.1	2.2	6.2	6.8	4.1
Social / Economic Development	3.2	4.3	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.6	6.7
Equality / Justice	7.7	7.2	0.8	0.8	1.2.	9.4	25.6
Governance / Effectiveness / Accountability / Transparency	2.8	5.8	1.0	1.8	2.6	0.0	0.8
National Independence	2.2	1.8	0.4	1.1	1.2	5.0	0.6
Majority Rule	0.6	16.8	0.8	0.4	0.0	0.0	8.3
Rule of Law	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2
Personal Security	0.5	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.4	0.5	0.5
Group Rights / Freedoms	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.2
Power Sharing / Government of National Unity	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.3	0.0	0.5
Other Positive Meanings	0.0	0.0	0.9	5.4	1.8	0.0	1.2
Negative Meanings							
Colonialism / Foreign Concept / Domination	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.0
Other Negative Meanings	0.3	0.4	0.8	0.7	1.1	0.1	0.2
Null / Neutral Meanings							
Nothing	2.0	7.6	2.9	0.1	7.0	0.0	0.9
Democracy Is Meaningless	0.1	3.7	0.5	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.5
Change of Government / Leadership / Laws	0.0	0.0	0.4	2.6	0.8	0.0	0.3
Too Afraid to Give Opinion	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.1
Does Not Matter	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1
Other Null / Neutral Meanings	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.7	1.8	0.0	0.2
Refused / Won't Explain	0.3	0.1	1.7	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1

What, if anything, do you understand by the word "democracy"? What comes to mind when you hear the word?
(All three responses added together)

There are, perhaps surprisingly, no major differences in how South Africans of different races spontaneously defined democracy.

Understandings of the Term "Democracy" (by Race)

	Black	White	Coloured	Indian	Total
Positive Meanings					
Civil Liberties / Personal Freedoms	73	68	53	60	70
Equality / Justice	24	25	33	41	26
Government By the People, For the People, Of the People	15	8	12	8	14
Voting / Electoral Choice / Multi-Party Competition	11	19	14	2	12
Majority Rule	11	2	1	0	8
Social / Economic Development	8	3	2	3	7
Peace / Unity	4	4	4	3	4
Governance / Effectiveness / Accountability / Transparency	1	2	1	0	1
National Independence	0	1	0	0	1
Power Sharing / Government of National Unity	1	0	0	0	1
Personal Security	0	1	1	1	1
Rule of Law	0	1	1	0	0
Group Rights / Freedoms	0	0	0	1	0
Other Positive Meanings	1	1	1	0	1
Negative Meanings1.2					
Colonialism / Foreign Concept / Domination	0	0	0	0	0
Other Negative Meanings	0	0	0	0	0
Null / Neutral Meanings					
Nothing	1	1	0	0	1
Democracy Is Meaningless	0	2	1	0	1
Change of Government / Leadership / Laws	0	0	1	0	0
Too Afraid to Give Opinion	0	0	0	0	0
Does Not Matter	0	1	0	0	0
Other Null / Neutral Meanings	0	0	0	0	0
Refused / Won't Explain	0	0	0	0	0

What, if anything, do you understand by the word "democracy"? What comes to mind when you hear the word?
(All three responses added together)

Components of Democracy

The Southern African Democracy Barometer also probed people's understandings of democracy in a second way. Building on a set of questions first used by *Id*asa in South Africa in 1995, we listed a series of political or procedural elements of classic liberal democratic theory (majority rule, regular elections, multi-party competition, and freedom of speech and dissent) as well as a number of economic or substantive components often cited by the proponents of social democracy (universal access to basic necessities, full employment, universal access to education, and income equality). Noting that "people associate democracy with many diverse meanings," we asked respondents whether each

of these aspects was "essential," "important," "not very important," or "not at all important," in order for a society to be called democratic.

When prompted in this way, "majority rule" (38%) is the political component most often cited by South Africans as essential, and multi-party competition (29%) the least. In fact, 27 percent say that multi-party competition is not very important or not important at all. This pattern also existed in the rest of the region (with the exception of Lesotho and Botswana). 37 percent of South Africans said that regular elections were an essential element of democracy (18 percent not important), and 35 percent said the same about freedom of speech (20 percent not important).

South Africans also mirror the responses of citizens across the region in that they are more likely to cite the economic items as essential aspects of democracy. 35 percent say a small gap between rich and poor is a crucial part of democracy, and much larger proportions of 66 percent say so about equality in education, 67 percent cite universal access to basic necessities, and 73 percent say a country must provide universal employment in order to be called democracy.

Understanding of Various Components of Democracy Across Southern Africa

	Botswana	Zim	Zambia	Malawi	Lesotho	Namibia	South Africa
Majority rule	47.2	66.8	46.7	65.6	41.0	42.0	38.4
Complete freedom for anyone to criticise the government	40.8	59.5	40.3	57.8	39.2	26.0	34.9
Regular elections	45.9	60.6	36.3	47.1	32.0	37.1	37.3
At least two political parties competing with each other	44.6	58.0	37.5	45.0	35.2	22.0	29.1
Basic necessities like shelter, food and water for everyone	52.3	68.6	57.3	77.0	60.1	51.5	67.2
Jobs for everyone	48.6	67.3	45.3	54.6	63.6	53.4	73.4
Equality in education	50.6	62.4	43.8	67.5	56.4	56.4	65.7
A small income gap between rich and poor	33.7	50.7	29.2	50.2	36.5	26.6	34.5

People associate democracy with many diverse meanings such as the ones I will mention now. In order for a society to be called <u>democratic</u>, is each of these:
% "Absolutely Essential"

Thus, there are consistent differences across respondents in their emphasis on the political components (majority rule, free speech, regular elections, multi-party competition) on one hand, and the economic components (access to basic necessities, full employment, equal education and economic equality) on the other. A statistical test known as Factor Analysis demonstrates that people's responses to these eight items tap two separate underlying dimensions. An examination of which items "load" or correlate with the two dimensions reveals a neat divide along political / procedural versus economic / substantive lines.

In order to summarise these separate dimensions, we created two scales measuring the degree to which political and economic components were important to democracy (each scale ranges from 1 to 4 where 1 means "not important at all' and 4 means "essential"). The validity of each scale was confirmed by Factor Analysis and its reliability by Reliability Analysis.

In a pattern that we will witness repeatedly, with the exception of the citizens of Lesotho, Namibians and South Africans are the least likely in the region to attach importance to the political components as important elements of democracy.

Political Components of Democracy Scale

Country of Respondent	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Zimbabwe	3.51	1112	.5968
Botswana	3.32	1109	.5667
Malawi	3.28	1180	.6774
Zambia	3.25	1089	.5843
South Africa	3.10	2009	.5689
Namibia	3.07	1037	.5683
Lesotho	2.95	776	.8720
Total	3.21	8312	.6449

In contrast, along with Zimbabweans and Basotho, South Africans are *most* likely to see the economic aspects as important elements of democracy.

Economic Components of Democracy

Country of Respondent	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Zimbabwe	3.55	1081	.5478
Lesotho	3.50	830	.6929
South Africa	3.50	2090	.4863
Malawi	3.46	1185	.5528
Namibia	3.34	1088	.4997
Botswana	3.33	1107	.5670
Zambia	3.29	1112	.5457
Total	3.42	8493	.5535

All of this suggests that Southern African conceptions of democracy at least *include* important substantive components of economic delivery. However, the extent to which South Africans emphasise economic and substantive outcomes over political procedures is greater than in any other country. In each country, we calculated the average frequency with which people cite political aspects as essential, and economic aspects. If the difference is positive, citizens have a more political understanding; if it is negative, they have a more economic understanding. In all seven Southern African countries, the ratio is at least slightly negative. However, where the differential in Zimbabwe is –1.1, and Botswana –1.7, the differential for South Africa is –25.3, the largest of the seven countries.

Balance of Political Vs. Economic Understandings of Democracy

	Botswana	Zim	Zambia	Malawi	Lesotho	Namibia	South Africa
Political Procedures Are An Essential Element of Democracy	44.6	61.2	40.2	53.9	36.9	31.8	34.9
Substantive Outcomes Are An Essential Element of Democracy[3]	46.3	62.3	43.9	62.3	54.2	47.0	60.2
Differential	-1.7	-1.1	-3.7	-8.4	-17.3	-15.2	-25.3

In 1995, white South Africans were far more likely to cite the political components of freedom of speech, regular elections, and multi-party competition as essential aspects than black respondents. By 2000, that pattern has reversed in important ways, as black South Africans are now most likely to say that freedom of speech and regular elections are essential to democracy (as well as majority rule). Whites are still most likely to see multi-party competition as an indispensable element of democracy. However, the larger point that should not obscured is that emphasis on these crucial aspects of democracy is extremely low.

Black, coloured and Indian respondents are all most likely to see the economic components as essential, especially with regard to access to basic necessities, universal employment and an equal education. At the same time, it is important to note that even white respondents attach more importance to economic components (with the notable exception of a small income gap between rich and poor) than to any political component.

Racial Differences In Conceptions of Democracy (1995-2000)

	Black		White		Coloured		Indian		Total.	
	95	00	95	00	95	00	95	00	95	00
Majority rule	36	45	14	13	20	24	14	18	30	38
Complete freedom for anyone to criticise the government	20	37	43	27	28	31	34	35	25	35
Regular elections	21	40	44	32	27	29	31	31	27	37
At least two political parties competing with each other	15	27	52	40	30	32	27	37	24	29
Basic necessities like shelter, food and water for everyone	N/A	71	N/A	50	N/A	62	N/A	69	N/A	67
Jobs for everyone	N/A	76	N/A	54	N/A	79	N/A	74	N/A	73
Equality in education	N/A	68	N/A	48	N/A	72	N/A	66	N/A	66
A small income gap between rich and poor	28	41	11	9	21	22	11	29	23	35

% "Essential"

Non-Democratic Alternatives

Aside from the extent to which people choose a regime called democracy as their preferred form of government, and what they understand that to mean, an equally important question is the extent to which South Africans support the practices commonly associated with democracy (such as civilian rule through elected representatives, multi-party competition, representative legislatures, and checks and balances among

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[3] Unweighted average of the percentages saying that four economic components are "essential" aspects of democracy.

representative institutions). To what extent are people willing to abandon these principles and move to their undemocratic antitheses (one party rule, traditional rule, military rule, presidential dictatorship, rule by unelected technocrats, or simply returning to the non-democratic *ancien regime* of *apartheid*? To asses this we modified a scale used in Central and Eastern Europe that assesses support for non-democratic alternatives to the present system (in which the present system is characterised not as "democracy" but as "our present system with elections and many political parties") (Rose et al, 1999).

With the exception of technocratic rule by economic experts, a majority of South Africans reject every non-democratic alternative. Three quarters reject the option of military rule (75%), and two-thirds reject the idea of presidential dictatorship (67%) or a return to *apartheid* (66%). Sixty four percent reject the option of rule by traditional leaders on a national scale. However, only 56 percent reject the option of single-party rule.

But while the average South African rejects non-democratic alternatives to ruling the country, when compared to the rest of the region, popular opposition to non-democratic alternatives in South Africa is relatively low, trailed only by Lesotho and Namibia on most issues.

Rejection of Non-Democratic Alternatives in Southern Africa

	Botswana	Zim	Zambia	Malawi	Lesotho	Namibia	South Africa
If only one political party, or candidates from only one party, were allowed to stand for elections and hold office?	77.5	73.8	79.8	76.5	50.8	62.5	56.2
If all decisions were made by a council of Elders, Traditional Leaders or Chiefs	73.7	62.7	79.7	71.2	58.7	54.5	63.9
If the army came in to govern the country?	84.6	79.2	94.0	82.4	69.6	58.7	75.4
If parliament and political parties were abolished, so that the President could decide everything?	86.1	77.5	89.3	67.0	68.9	57.0	66.6
If economic experts rather than an elected government or parliament made all important decisions about the economy.	51.6	33.6	58.9	38.9	48.8	40.5	26.2
IF [the country returned to the previous regime][4]	70.6	73.2	75.9	72.1	64.6	77.1	65.4

Our current system of governing with regular elections and more than one political party is not the only one _____ has ever had. Some people say that we would be better off if we had a different system of government. How much would you <u>disapprove, neither disapprove nor approve</u>, or <u>approve</u> of the following alternatives to our current system of government with at least two political parties and regular elections?
(% "Strongly disapprove" / "Disapprove")

A factor analysis of the responses demonstrates that, with the exception of people's feelings about technocratic rule, Southern Africans respond to all these options in a common way. That is, while they make distinctions between the various items (as

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[4] In Botswana this was expressed as a return to British colonial rule; in Zimbabwe, a return to the Smith regime; for Zambia, it was return to rule under Kaunda; for Malawi, a return to the rule under the MCP government; for Lesotho, it was a return to military rule; for Namibia, a return to rule by South Africa, and for South Africa, a return to *apartheid.*.

evidenced by the different levels of aggregate responses), they also react to them as variations on the same common theme: non-democratic rule. This in itself has at several important implications. It confirms that when people say they prefer a democratic regime to something else, they are not just registering random responses, or socially accepted responses.   It also confirms that even though people may have positive views about traditional leadership, as a form of national government they see it in the same light as one party rule, military rule, a presidential strong man, or a return to the colonial or authoritarian past.

And finally, it suggests that people do not see technocratic dominance of national economic decisions as an anti-democratic or authoritarian aspect. It is only on this option that there is any modicum of support for a non-democratic form of decision-making. I South Africa, 20 percent reject this alternative, but 44 percent would support it. This suggests that many South and Southern Africans do not feel sufficiently confident of their grasp of the operations of the national economy and would rather leave these decisions to those more qualified than them.

Based on an index ranging from 1 to 5 (where 1 means strong approval and 5 means strong disapproval) average rejection of non-democratic alternatives is highest in Zambia (4.3), Botswana (at 4.2), and Zimbabwe (4.2) (none of which are statistically different from one another as demonstrated by an Analysis of Variance).   Rejection of non-democratic rule is weakest in Lesotho (3.9), South Africa (3.8) and Namibia (3.8).

Rejection of Non-Democratic Alternatives Index

Country	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Zambia	4.30	1108	.7064
Botswana	4.22	957	.8306
Zimbabwe	4.19	1078	.8104
Malawi	4.13	1078	.8319
Lesotho	3.89	895	1.0486
South Africa	3.83	2006	.7653
Namibia	3.82	942	.8866
Total	4.03	8147	.8524

Black respondents are significantly less opposed to one-party rule than others South Africans (in fact 27 percent say they would support such a system), and rule by traditional authority (19 percent would support) and presidential dictatorship (18 percent would actually support such a system). There are few racial differences on opposition to military rule and with regard to technocratic rule.

While three quarters of black respondents would oppose a return to white minority rule, 13 percent actually say they would support it. Only one-half of coloured respondents are opposed to such an ideas, and just one-quarter of Indians (27%). In fact, one half (49%) of Indians would approve as would one 23 percent of coloured respondents. Just under one-third (30%) of whites would oppose a return to *apartheid* style rule, and one-third (31%) would support it.

South Africans' Rejection of Non-Democratic Alternatives (by Race)

	Black	White	Coloured	Indian	Total
If only one political party, or candidates from only one party, were allowed to stand for elections and hold office?	52	70	70	70	56
If all decisions were made by a council of Elders, Traditional Leaders or Chiefs	61	76	68	69	64
If the army came in to govern the country?	76	74	70	70	75
If parliament and political parties were abolished, so that the President could decide everything?	64	79	68	80	67
If economic experts rather than an elected government or parliament made all important decisions about the economy.	28	20	24	18	26
IF [the country returned to the previous regime]	74	31	50	27	65.4

Deficiencies in South Africans' attachments to democratic rule are also revealed in a question used by I*d*asa since 1997 that asks respondents whether they would be willing to live under an authoritarian government if it were able to resolve what have remained three of the most pressing problems facing the country – crime, joblessness, and homelessness. In July / August 2000, 62 percent of respondents said they would be willing to live under such a government, only 30 percent said they would be unwilling. There were only minor racial differences in these results.

South Africans' Willingness to Live Under An "Effective" Authoritarian Regime

	June / July 1997	November 1998	July / Aug 2000
Willing / Very Willing	54	48	62
Unwilling / Very Unwilling	37	34	30
Don't Know	9	18	8

If a non-elected government or leader could impose law and order, and deliver houses and jobs, how willing or unwilling would you be to give up regular elections and live under such a government?

Willingness to Live Under an Effective Authoritarian Regime (by Race)

	June / July 1997	November 1998	July / Aug 2000
Black	36	31	29
White	41	51	35
Coloured	43	34	32
Indian	19	20	28

% "unwilling / very unwilling"

Evaluating the Democratic Content of the Present Regime

The questions just reviewed can be seen as expressions of "demand" for democracy. But even though we have found moderate levels of demand for democracy, and low levels of demand for contending regime types among, what about the perceived "supply" of

democracy? How much democracy do South Africans feel is being produced by their political system?[5]

The Extent of Democracy

We used two questions to assess people's perceptions of the extent of how democratic their political system is. First of all, we asked people to evaluate the freeness and fairness of their most recent election. Seven in ten either say that the July 1999 elections were "completely free and fair" (42%) or "free and fair, with some minor problems" (31%). Compared to other people in the region, South Africans are relatively optimistic about their electoral procedures, outdistanced only by the 83 of Batswana and 78 percent of Namibians who say that their most recent elections were either completely or largely free and fair.

Perceptions of Free and Fair Elections Across Southern Africa

	Botswana	Zim	Zambia	Malawi	Lesotho	Namibia	South Africa
Completely Free and Fair	54.5	16.2	42.8	46.2	37.3	49.6	42.1
Free and fair, with some minor problems	28.3	14.5	22.3	16.6	16.9	28.4	30.6
On the whole, free and fair but with several major problems	6.5	20.9	9.6	12.7	11.0	7.8	13.6
Not free or fair	3.4	25.5	7.8	21.3	18.0	3.3	6.1
Don't know	6.8	22.2	15.3	3.1	16.7	10.8	7.6

On the whole, how would you rate the freeness and fairness of the last national election, held in ____? Was it: _____?

Within South Africa, there are sharp racial differences, with eight-in-ten black respondents saying the 1999 election was completely (50%) or largely (30%) free and fair. However, only two-thirds of coloured (66%), and four in ten Indian (43%) and white (42%) respondents said so. These problems are not new and were documented before the 1999 elections in terms of perceptions of the 1994 election, as well as minority groups' expectations of how the Independent Electoral Commission would handle the upcoming election (Mattes, Africa & Taylor, 1998).

How Democratic Was the Last Election?

	Blacks	Whites	Coloured	Indian	Total
Completely Free and Fair	50	12	25	22	42
Free and fair, with some minor problems	30	31	41	22	31
On the whole, free and fair but with several major problems	12	23	16	18	14
Not free or fair	3	24	2	20	6
Don't know	6	11	16	18	8

On the whole, how would you rate the freeness and fairness of the last national election, held in ____? Was it: _____?

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[5] While we conceptualise and measure these in different ways, the larger concepts of "supply" and "demand" of democracy come from Rose et al (1999).

We also asked people across Southern Africa for an overall evaluation of the democratic extent of their political system. In no country does a simple majority feel their societies have achieved full democracy. In South Africa, six-in-ten feel that the way the country is governed is completely (26%) or largely (34%) democratic." This is basically the same as the perceptions that Zambians and Malawians have of their governments, and far more optimistic than the assessments of Zimbabweans and Basotho about their governments. However, South Africans lag behind the more optimistic assessment of Namibians and Batswana of democracy in their own country.

How Democratic Is the Way Your Country Is Governed

	Botswana	Zim	Zambia	Malawi	Lesotho	Namibia	South Africa
Completely democratic	45.8	9.0	24.4	33.8	23.6	29.6	26.3
Democratic, but with some minor exceptions	36.2	17.8	37.8	28.2	12.6	41.4	33.6
Democratic, with some major exceptions	7.6	17.2	20.1	22.6	12.8	15.1	24.0
Not a democracy	5.0	37.9	7.1	12.3	17.3	2.7	8.3
Do not understand question DO NOT READ	1.2	12.1	2.3	0.8	2.6	3.7	2.2
Don't know DO NOT READ	4.0	5.2	7.0	2.2	30.8	7.6	5.7

On the whole, is the way _____ is governed: READ OUT OPTIONS

While there are significant racial difference in these assessments, it is noteworthy that black South Africans do not award their system wildly positive evaluations with regard to its democratic content. Only 31% say it is completely democratic, placing them far behind the citizens of Botswana. On the other extreme, no Indian respondents interviewed felt that South Africa is governed in a wholly democratic fashion.

How Democratic Is the Way Your Country Is Governed

	Black	White	Coloured	Indian	Total
Completely democratic	31	12	15	0	26
Democratic, but with some minor exceptions	34	32	37	24	34
Democratic, with some major exceptions	22	35	25	22	24
Not a democracy	7	11	10	38	8
Do not understand question DO NOT READ	2	3	2	6	2
Don't know DO NOT READ	5	8	11	11	6

On the whole, is the way _____ is governed: READ OUT OPTIONS

A factor analysis of the responses to both these question suggests that people's responses to these two items across the region were drawing on a common underlying impression about the quality and extent of democracy in their own country. Thus, the responses to the two items can be combined together to form a reliable four point scale running from 1 to 4 (where 1 is the view that elections are not free and fair, and the country is not democratic, and 4 is the view that there are no problems with either).

Batswana see their political system as more democratic than other southern Africans (3.4 out of a possible 4) followed by Namibians (3.3). Zambians (3.1), South Africans (3.0), Malawians (2.9) and Basotho (2.8) give less optimistic assessments of their political system, but still positive on balance. Zimbabweans not only have the lowest estimates of the extent of democracy in their country (2.13 out of 4), but are below the midpoint (2.5)

and thus on balance, tend to think their country is either not democratic or has severe problems in this respect.

Extent of Democracy Index

Country of Respondent	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Botswana	3.37	1062	.6739
Namibia	3.25	943	.6405
Zambia	3.07	916	.7463
South Africa	3.01	1910	.7724
Malawi	2.89	1140	.9754
Lesotho	2.78	699	.9778
Zimbabwe	2.13	803	.9067
Total	2.96	7473	.8797

Satisfaction With Democracy

Regardless of current perceptions of the *extent* of democracy supplied by their multi-party regime, how *satisfied* are South Africans with the way democracy works in practice in their country?

In July / August 2000, 51 percent said they were "very" (16%) or "fairly" (35%) satisfied with "the way democracy works in South Africa." 43 percent said they were "not very satisfied" (27%) or "not at all satisfied" (17%). But while the average South African is satisfied with the way democracy works in this country, overall levels of satisfaction are significantly lower than in Botswana (75%), Namibia (64%) and Zambia (59%) and Malawi (57%). It is substantially better than in Lesotho (where only 38% say they are satisfied with the way democracy is working there) or in Zimbabwe (where 18 percent are satisfied, 57 percent dissatisfied, and another 17 percent took the highly unusual step of volunteering to interviewers that they could not answer this question since the country is not a democracy).

Satisfaction With Democracy

	Botswana	Zim	Zambia	Malawi	Lesotho	Namibia	South Africa
Very satisfied / Fairly satisfied	74.6	18.2	58.8	57.2	38.4	64.2	52.1
Not very satisfied / Not at all satisfied	21.7	56.9	35.2	39.0	30.5	25.3	42.8
_____ is not a democracy (Volunteered)	0.8	16.8	0.7	1.7	4.2	0.5	1.1
Don't know	2.8	6.8	3.7	1.8	26.5	9.9	4.1

Overall, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in _____?

And while the average South African is satisfied with the way democracy works in the country, this proportion is significantly lower than the 63 percent who said so in November 1998. It does represent, however, a measured improvement over surveys in 1995 and 1997. Black South Africans have consistently exhibited the greatest levels of satisfaction with the operation of democracy in the country, and whites and Indians, the least.

Satisfaction With Democracy In South Africa (1995-2000)

	Sept / Nov 1995	June / July 1997*	Nov 1998	July / Aug 2000
Very satisfied / Fairly satisfied	41	38	63	52
Not very satisfied / Not at all satisfied	57	34	32	43
____ is not a democracy (Volunteered)	NA	NA	NA	1
Don't know	2	4	5	4

Overall, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in _____?
* 5 pt scale

Satisfaction With Democracy (by Race)

	Sept / Nov 1995	June / July 1997*	November 1998	July / August 2000
Black	47	45	73.5	59.3
White	23	7	27.6	25.9
Coloured	40	25	43.7	40.3
Indian	38	13	33.1	10.9

* 5 pt scale

Has Multi-Party Politics Delivered More Freedom and Rights?

Another way of assessing people's satisfaction with the output of their present multi-party regime (as opposed to the output of the state and government) is to ask them about the extent to which they feel their lives are better or worse than under the previous regime. It is possible that, regardless of how democratic people see their current regime, their ultimate satisfaction and support for democracy may depend more on whether or not they feel that their political system is better than what they had before. More specifically, has the present regime secured a greater range of freedoms and rights than the previous regime? This would be consistent with what has been called the "Churchill Hypothesis": that is, people do not have to "love" democracy but merely to believe that is better than all the other alternatives (Rose et al, 1999).

Thus, we used a scale of questions first asked in Central and Eastern Europe that measures the extent to which people feel that their multi-party regimes have delivered increased political freedoms (see Rose et al, 1999). We asked people whether there is more freedom of speech, of political association, of voting and from arbitrary arrest under the new dispensation. However, given our concern with competing political and economic understandings of democracy in Africa, we modified the scale to include measures of a number of aspects of equity and quality of life. We asked respondents whether people were now more equal (both in terms of treatment by government, as well as in overall condition), safer from crime and violence, had greater access to basic necessities, or were more likely to have an adequate standard of living.

Between three quarters and 85 percent of South Africans feel that their new democratic regime has brought about increases in freedom from arbitrary arrest (75%), freedom of speech (77%), freedom of association (84%) and freedom to vote (84%). With the exception of Lesotho (whose 1994 transition from military rule stands incomplete to this day) the countries who have witnessed transitions to multi-party rule in the 1990s have substantially greater proportions of people who feel that they enjoy greater freedoms than do Botswana or Zimbabwe. This lends support to a hypothesis advanced in our initial six-country regional report that the more recent a country's transition to multi-party rule, the greater the proportions of respondents who said they enjoyed greater political freedoms (Mattes et al, 2000).

The second point to note in these findings is that the proportion of South Africans who feel they enjoy greater equality or an increased quality of life is consistently lower than those who say they enjoy increased political freedoms. Sixty percent say that people are now treated more equally by government than under *apartheid* (24% say thing have become worse in this respect). 52 percent feel that South Africans are now more equal to one another than before (23% say this has become worse). 51 percent say that people now enjoy greater access to basic necessities such as food and water (26% think things are worse). However, only 39 percent think that people are more likely to have an adequate standard of living and an almost equal proportion (34%) say that it is less likely. Finally, just 21 percent think that people are more free from crime and violence than under *apartheid*; fully 65 percent say that people's safety from crime and violence has become worse since 1994.

Yet this tendency is true for all countries surveyed. In *every* country in Southern Africa more people see greater political freedoms emanating from multi-party rule than feel they enjoy equity or a better quality of life. Thus, both South and Southern Africans are aware that transitions from autocracy to multi-party rule have brought greater political freedom even as they are not so certain that it has improved the quality of their economic lives.

Perceived Increases in Freedoms and Rights Under Multi-Party Politics

	Botswana	Zim	Zambia	Malawi	Lesotho	Namibia	South Africa
Anyone can freely say what he or she thinks	57.0	54.2	76.1	88.9	56.0	79.9	77.3
People can join any political organisation they choose.	59.6	63.2	84.0	93.3	63.3	85.4	83.6
People can live without fear of being arrested by the police if they have not done anything wrong.	57.3	63.9	73.7	84.6	59.3	78.7	75.3
Each person can freely choose who to vote for without feeling forced by others	60.1	62.5	81.7	94.0	65.8	85.7	83.6
Everybody is treated equally and fairly by government.	49.1	43.9	43.8	57.4	47.2	64.8	60.4
People are safe from crime and violence	43.4	32.6	35.4	14.4	39.9	51.7	20.7
People have an adequate standard of living.	45.3	28.4	27.8	50.5	41.8	57.4	39.1
People have access to basic necessities (like food and water)	50.8	35.7	36.0	59.9	45.6	61.1	50.5
_____ are equal to one another	42.9	36.9	32.9	49.1	40.3	66.3	51.6

Some people say that today, under our current system of government, our political and overall life is better than it was under _____. Others say things are no better, or even worse. For each of these following matters, would you say things today are worse, about the same, or better? (% "much better / better")

A factor analysis of the responses to these items indicates that they actually tap two different underlying dimensions, one reflecting evaluations of increased political freedoms and the other measuring perceptions of increased economic rights. This is another indication that South and Southern Africa are quite able to make separate evaluations about the political and economic consequences of their country's respective democratic experiments and do not simply make one "package" assessment of democracy. Thus, we constructed two indices that calculate an average (mean) level of appreciation of increases in political freedom, and of economic rights, under multi-party democracy.

Because the index does not include those people who did not know, and because it registers differences in salience of opinion (e.g. between "better" and "much better") it arrives at slightly different conclusions than our observations above drawn from a comparison of the absolute proportions who felt things had got better. When it comes to political evaluations, Malawians have the most positive assessments of greater freedom their new democratic multi-party regime has brought greater freedoms (4.5 on a scale of 1 to 5). While Zimbabweans, on balance, do feel that they enjoy more political freedom under the post-independence Mugabe regime than under the UDI / Ian Smith regime (their mean score of 3.6 is above the 3.0 mark that divides negative and positive assessments), they are the least optimistic of all Southern Africans. South Africans fall midway down the list of Southern African countries, and are statistically indistinguishable from Batswana or Basotho.

Political Freedoms Scale

Country of Respondent	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Malawi	4.46	1178	.6842
Namibia	4.20	1098	.6935
Botswana	4.18	762	.6490
South Africa	4.11	2125	.7913
Lesotho	4.04	941	1.0831
Zambia	4.02	1138	.7546
Zimbabwe	3.60	1054	.8302
Total	4.09	8296	.8250

A comparison of the overall regional mean scale score for political freedoms (4.1) to that of economic rights (3.2) is another reflection of the fact that Southern Africans are far more likely to agree that multi-party democracy has brought political than economic gains. The South African mean for political freedoms is 4.1 but for economic rights it is 3.1. For the region as a whole, the political mean is 4.1 and the economic 3.2. The much higher standard deviation for increased economic rights also demonstrates that there is far more disagreement among people about the economic consequences of the transitions to multi-party rule, and also reflects the quite different economic trajectories of post-authoritarian Southern Africa.

In terms of economics, Batswana are the most likely to feel that democracy has brought (or accompanied) improvements in their economic conditions than compared to life under British colonial rule. This is a clear reflection of the decades of sustained growth experienced by Botswana following its independence. Zimbabweans and Zambians are *least* likely to feel that the quality of their economic lives has improved as since thre transitions from Kaunda's one party rule, and UDI white minority rule. In fact, the mean score in both cases (2.8) lies below the midpoint of the scale, meaning that the average Zimbabwean and Zambian feels that their economic lives have either remained the same or deteriorated under Mugabe and Chiluba.

Economic Rights

Country of	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Respondent			
Botswana	3.71	731	.8266
Namibia	3.63	1011	.7934
Lesotho	3.41	901	1.2890
Malawi	3.12	1176	1.0104
South Africa	3.07	2069	.9957
Zimbabwe	2.83	1040	.9920
Zambia	2.76	1083	.9475
Total	3.17	8011	1.0409

Not surprisingly, given the ranked inequalities legislated by the *apartheid* regime, we see consistent racial differences in South Africans' comparisons of life under democracy to life under the *apartheid* regime. Black respondents consistently hold the most optimistic view of their lives since 1994. On only two items do less than a majority feel that life has got better: standard of living (47%) and crime and violence (25%).

In contrast, whites have the most pessimistic views. On no item does a majority feel that things are better, the closest comes with 43 percent saying that freedom of association is better now than before. Coloured and Indian respondents fall somewhere in between. While not at as great a frequency as blacks, at least three-quarters of coloured South Africans feel that there is more political freedom than before. They are far less optimistic, however, when it comes to comparisons of quality of life. Indian respondents give relatively optimistic view concerning political freedom in the new South Africa, but are even more pessimistic than whites when asked to comment on issues of equity, security and quality of life.

By far, the area where almost everyone feels that life has deteriorated (or at least stayed the same) is safety from crime and violence. Unsurprisingly, 92% of whites feel the safety situation is worse now than before 1994 (24% say much worse). But so do 58 percent of blacks (27% say much worse). Forty-four percent of coloured respondents feel it is "much worse" and 71 percent of Indians say "much worse."

Perceived Increases in Freedoms and Rights In the New South Africa

	Total	Black	White	Coloured	Indian
Anyone can freely say what he or she thinks	77	86	37	74	54
People can join any political organisation they choose.	84	92	43	77	66
People can live without fear of being arrested by the police if they have not done anything wrong.	75	83	37	76	45
Each person can freely choose who to vote for without feeling forced by others	84	92	36	84	75
Everybody is treated equally and fairly by government.	60	64	15	42	7
People are safe from crime and violence	21	25	2	16	0
People have an adequate standard of living.	39	47	10	27	4
People have access to basic necessities (like food and water)	51	57	25	46	17
_____ are equal to one another	52	58	26	43	13

% "Better / Much Better'

Overall Comparison of Regimes

Another measure used by some countries in the Southern African Democracy Barometer that taps the "Churchill Hypotheses" is a simple set of questions that set out a scale where 0 is the "worst form of governing a country" and 10 is the "best form of governing a country." Then it asks people to place on that scale "the way the country was governed" under *apartheid* (or the previous non-democratic regime in other countries), "our current system of government with regular elections where everyone can vote and there are at least two political parties," and finally the "political system of this country as you expect it to be in 10 years' time." (Rose et al, 1999).

In June / July 2000, 25 percent of South Africans gave a positive evaluation (that is, scores of between 6 and 10) to the *apartheid* system of government, 12 percent neutral (a score of 5) and 63 percent gave it a negative score (from 0 to 4), with one-third (32%) giving it the lowest score possible of 0. In contrast, 58 percent gave a positive assessment of the present system of government, with 18 percent neutral, and 24 percent negative. 53 percent gave a positive rating to the system of government as they expect it to be in 2010, 16 percent neutral and 32 percent negative.

While the 25 percent who gave a positive assessment of the *apartheid* system of government might surprise some, when compared to the other three SADB countries where this question was asked, we see that this is roughly similar to the 26 percent of Zambians with positive views of the former one party UNIP regime of Kenneth Kaunda. And it is less than the 39 percent of Malawians with a positive assessment of the one party regime of Hastings Banda, and far less than the 60 percent of Basotho who give positive marks to their pre-1994 military government.

South Africans (53%) also award far higher marks to their present system of government than do Zambians (25%), Malawians (28%), and Basotho (35%). Finally, South Africans

and Zambians are equally optimistic about what kind of political system they expect to have ten years hence (53%), compared to 49 percent of Basotho and 36 percent of Malawians.

Comparative Regime Assessments in Four SADB Countries

	Zambia			Malawi			Lesotho			South Africa		
	Kaunda	Present	Future	Banda	Present	Future	Mil. Govt	Present	Future	*Apartheid*	Present	Future
Positive	25.9	24.6	52.7	38.5	27.6	36.2	59.9	34.6	48.6	25.4	57.5	52.7
Neutral	22.9	20.8	13.7	13.9	15.3	11.3	16.4	13.3	11.7	11.5	18.1	15.6
Negative	51.2	54.6	33.6	47.5	57.1	52.5	23.7	52.11	39.6	63.2	24.4	31.7

We are now going to discuss different forms of government. I would like you to give marks out of 10. The best form of governing a country gets 10 out of 10 and the worst form of governing a country gets no marks at all. What rating out of 10 would you give to:
-The way the country was governed under (UNIP / MCP / the military government / apartheid)
-Our current system of government with regular elections where everyone can vote and there are at least two political parties.
-The political system of this country as you expect it to be in 10 years time.

There was a great deal of variation among South Africans of different races on these questions. While eight in ten (79%) black respondents gave a higher rating to the present government, the same was true for just under one half of coloured (49%) respondents, less than a third of whites (30%) and just under quarter of Indians (26%).

Comparing Apartheid and Democracy As Systems of Government

	Total	Black	White	Coloured	Indian
Better Rating of *Apartheid* System	23	15	51	41	62
Same Ratings	8	6	19	10	12
Better Rating of Present Democratic System	69	79	30	49	26

July / August 2000

This set of questions has been asked in South Africa twice before, once in 1998 by I*d*asa and once in 1995 in the World Values Study. South Africans' views of their new multi-party regime have risen steadily from 36 percent in 1995, 44 percent in 1998 to 58 percent in 2000. At the same time, the promise of the future seems to be dimming somewhat. In 1998 64 percent expressed positive views of the system of government expect their political system to be in ten years time, that number now stands at 53 percent. In addition, as it fades into the recent past, life under *apartheid* appears to be seen with more nostalgia. It received positive assessments from 17 percent in 1995, raising to 21 percent in 1998, and now standing at 25 percent.

Apartheid nostalgia has increased substantially over this time period among all South Africans, though to different degrees. Among blacks, the proportions giving *apartheid* positive ratings as a system of government has risen from 8 to 17 percent in five years. Whites have gone from 39 to 59 percent, coloured respondents from 11 to 41 percent, and Indians from 13 to 56 percent positive. However, two points are appropriate here. First of all, white nostalgia for the past should not simply be seen as "authoritarian nostalgia," as we see in Malawi. For whites, the past means a democracy, to be sure, a racially limited *heerenvolk* democracy. It might also oversimplify matters simply to conclude

that these trends suggest a nostalgia for racial domination, nor even for separateness, but simply the view that things "worked" better then. In this regard, it is important to note that white and coloured evaluations of the present non-racial democratic system have become dramatically more positive over the past two years.

While black optimism about the present democratic system increased from 50 to 63 percent in the past five years, their optimism about the future political system tumbled sharply (80% to 60%) over that period, as did those of coloured and Indian respondents.

South Africans Compare Past, Present and Future Regimes

	Rating of Apartheid Regime			Rating of Present Regime			Rating of Regime in Ten Years Time		
	1995	1998*	2000	1995	1998*	2000	1995	1998*	2000
Positive	16.5	20.6	25.3	35.9	44.2	57.5	60.0	64.1	52.7
Neutral	18.2	18.5	11.5	32.8	28.7	18.1	17.8	15.7	15.6
Negative	65.3	59.9	63.2	31.3	26.5	24.5	22.1	17.5	31.7

* 10 point scale: thus positive responses are scores 10 to 7, neutral is 5 and 6, and negative is 1 to 4. 1995 data taken from the South African version of the World Values Study.

South Africans Compare Past, Present and Future Regimes

	Rating of Apartheid Regime			Rating of Present Regime			Rating of Regime in Ten Years Time		
	1995	1998*	2000	1995	1998*	2000	1995	1998*	2000
Black	8.2	14.2	16.6	50.3	55.3	62.6	79.8	75.7	60.3
White	38.5	44.4	58.7	11.5	7.0	42.2	24.1	20.6	20.2
Coloured	10.9	25.8	41.0	26.6	27.2	44.3	54.9	55.2	45.2
Indian	12.9	34.0	56.2	27.5	19.8	23.8	53.4	31.5	24.7

* 10 point scale, thus positive responses are seen as scores 6-10-7, neutral as 5 and 6, and negative as 1 to 4.

South Africans' Attitudes Toward Democracy

A Demand and Supply Model of Democracy

Putting these questions together allows us to construct a useful picture of the expressed "demand" for democracy and its perceived "supply" in South and Southern Africa.

In Botswana, Malawi and Zambia, there appears to be a relative *equilibrium* of demand for democracy and perceived supply. In Botswana, that equilibrium exists at *very high* levels, and three quarters of Batswana are satisfied with this stasis. In Malawi and Zambia, the equilibrium occurs at *modestly high* levels, and majorities are satisfied.

In Namibia, there is a noticeable *disequilibrium*. Namibians exhibit relatively weak demand for democracy, yet feel their country is governed democratically, and are relatively satisfied with the way democracy works there. This raises a few different possibilities. It might be that the regime is providing more democracy than the people want; or, it might be that while Namibians are not wildly fond of democracy, they are willing to consume whatever output the dominant party regime produces that it chooses to call democracy.

In Zimbabwe, there is a more severe *disequilibrium* in the other direction. Put simply, Zimbabweans long for democracy, but are adamant that they are not getting it. They are very dissatisfied with this situation.

At present, Lesotho appears to enjoy *equilibrium* at fairly *low levels* of demand and supply. Minorities demand democracy (though most people also reject the non-democratic alternatives we posed to them), and a minority also feel that their government is democratic (though they do perceive a significant amount of political liberalisation compared to life under the military regime).

While the patterns are not as clear cut, the South African profile tends to resemble Namibia. Support for democracy is modest, and rejection of non-democratic alternatives is the lowest in the region. Yet large majorities feel the 1999 elections were basically free and fair, large majorities also feel that the introduction of non-racial democracy has resulted in advances in political rights, and large majorities feel the present democratic system is a much better way of governing a country than the old one. The only differences are that the proportions of South Africa who say their country is democratic, and who are satisfied with the way democracy works, are not as large as in Namibia.

Expressed Demand and Perceived Supply of Democracy

	Botswana	Zim	Zambia	Malawi	Lesotho	Namibia	South Africa
Demand							
Support Democracy	82	71	74	66	39	58	60
Commitment to Democracy	65	74	54	61	34	43	55
Reject Non-Democratic Alternatives[6]	79	73	84	73	63	62	59
Supply							
Elections Free and Fair	83	31	65	63	54	78	73
Country Is Governed Democratically	82	27	62	62	36	71	60
Satisfied With Way Democracy Works	75	18	59	57	38	64	52
Political Freedoms Have Increased[7]	59	61	79	90	61	83	80

[6] Average of five items measuring rejection of non-democratic alternative regimes.
[7] Average of four items measuring perceived increases in political freedom under multi-party regime.

South Africans' Attitudes Toward Democracy

III.
South Africans' Views of Their Political System

The previous section tapped public attitudes toward a regime called democracy. However, democracy does not exist in a vacuum. Public support for democracy may depend on the performance of government and state institutions. The actual quality of democracy certainly depends on it. Thus, in this section, we turn our attention to South Africans' attitudes toward the state as well as attitudes toward the government.

State Legitimacy

A democratic government cannot make every decision based on consensus, nor can it afford to take a vote on every policy decision it faces, especially those decisions that are matters of executive and administrative policy (rather than legislation). Almost all legislative and administrative policy outcomes will be opposed by significant minorities, and sometimes even by majorities. As Lincoln said, "You can't please all the people, all of the time." A widely held sense of legitimacy amongst the citizenry is what enables a state to obtain compliance for those decisions without having to resort to force.

Legitimate political systems are those that can depend on compliance from citizens, business, and civil society. Just as we speak of democratic legitimation as the sense that democracy is "the only game in town," state and government legitimacy can be seen as the sense that there is no alternative set of structures or institutions that people with the right to make authoritative, binding societal decisions. Legitimacy "endows governmental decisions with moral oughtness" (Eldridge, 1977: 8). It is the sense that rule-makers have the right to make laws, and that those laws ought to be obeyed (Tyler, 1990: 27-28).

At its broadest, this sense of legitimacy comprises the belief that those in power have a right to make binding decisions because: (1) they are duly elected to that office by widely accepted procedures; (2) they exercise power in a widely accepted way; and (3) that the rules that govern the state (e.g. the constitution) reflect widely accepted values and norms.

Legitimacy constitutes a form of "diffuse" support for a political system, a form of support that does not have to be earned but rather inheres in the institutions of the political system rather than the current occupants of those institutions (which is referred to as "specific" support) (Easton, 1965).

While specific support is based on short-term satisfaction with government actions and policy outputs, diffuse support is said to be based largely on longer-term, affective attachments to authority usually learned in childhood, attachments that are unrelated to cost-benefit calculations. According to Easton, diffuse support constitutes a "reserve of support that enables a system to weather the many storms when outputs cannot be balanced off against input demands. It is a kind of support that a system does not have to buy with more or less direct benefits (Easton, 1965: 273).

A legitimate political system is likely to be a more stable political system. Legitimacy acts as a buffer to cushion the system against shocks from short-term dissatisfaction with policy and performance (Easton, 1965). It should bring about more cooperative behaviour on the part of its citizens; they are more likely to obey the law and refrain from anti-system behaviour (e.g. protest) if they view the sources of those laws as legitimate (Tyler, 1990: 30-33).

How much legitimacy has accrued to South Africa's new political institutions? Is there a widely shared belief that it has a right to make decisions, and that people ought to comply with those decisions whether or not the agree with them? Responses to the Southern African Democracy Barometer set of questions designed to assess legitimacy at its broadest level does not suggest that this has yet occurred in South Africa.

There is a widespread, though not consensual, agreement amongst almost three quarters of South Africans (73%) that the government was elected by accepted procedures; eleven percent disagree. Just over one half (53%) say that the government exercises power in an acceptable way, while almost one quarter (24%) disagree. Slightly less than six in ten (59%) feel that the constitution expresses the values and aspirations of the South African people. Seventeen percent say that it does not. And finally, only 43 percent agree that the government has the right to make decisions that everyone has to obey, regardless of whether or not they agree with the specific decision.

On the first three items, South Africans lag behind citizens of Botswana and Namibia. On the last, they actually show some of the highest levels of agreement, because agreement was low across the region. From one perspective, the lower level of agreement with the last item could indicate that while people may feel that their political systems formally meet the conditions of legitimacy, they have not yet developed that sense of attachment that brings about widespread acceptance of unpopular decisions. From another perspective, it may indicate that people feel that government cannot just do whatever it wants, but must take public opinion into account when making decisions. In fact, a factor analysis of these items indicates that while responses to these four items do tap one common underlying dimension, views toward this last statement are the most weakly related to the underling factor.

State Legitimacy Across Southern Africa

	Botswana	Zim	Zambia	Malawi	Lesotho	Namibia	South Africa
Our government was elected to power by accepted procedures.	82.0	57.8	70.5	65.4	53.6	78.1	73.1
Our government exercises power in an acceptable way	72.7	23.8	56.8	61.8	49.7	70.3	52.9
Our constitution expresses the values and aspirations of the _____ people.	62.4	22.6	49.5	56.4	48.6	65.5	59.4
Our government has the right to make decisions that all people have to abide by whether or not they agree with them.	37.3	20.2	32.8	29.1	43.6	40.5	42.5

Combining responses to these items into a reliable and valid scale demonstrates that Namibians and Batswana accord their government the highest average levels of legitimacy. South Africans lag behind these two countries and compare more with the ctizens of Lesotho. The lowest levels

of agreement are found in Zimbabwe. In fact, the mean level of agreement (2.5 on a scale of 1 to 5) falls below the midpoint of 3, and thus suggests that the Zimbabwean political system is seen as *illegitimate* by its citizens.

Legitimacy Index

Country of Respondent	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Namibia	3.72	974	.7263
Botswana	3.61	1043	.8014
Lesotho	3.53	784	1.3872
South Africa	3.51	2033	.8921
Zambia	3.35	971	.9101
Malawi	3.25	1112	1.1179
Zimbabwe	2.51	962	.9709
Total	3.37	7899	1.0310

As a whole, these questions show very little change in public attitudes since the last time they were asked in November 1998, with some decreases in the proportions who feel the government exercises power acceptably. Black respondents, who accord significantly higher levels of legitimacy to government showed few shifts since 1998 (with the exception the item measuring the exercise of power). Coloured opinion remained stable with some increases in favourable views of government. Legitimacy dropped slightly among whites, but much more sharply among Indian respondents.

State Legitimacy (1998-2000)

	November 1998	July / Aug 2000
Our government was elected to power by accepted procedures.	76	73
Our government exercises power in an acceptable way	61	53
Our constitution expresses the values and aspirations of the Zambian people.	58	59
Our government has the right to make decisions that all people have to abide by whether or not they agree with them.	43	43

State Legitimacy By Race (1998-2000)

	Black		White		Coloured		Indian	
	1998	2000	1998	2000	1998	2000	1998	2000
Our government was elected to power by accepted procedures.	84	81	46	36	68	69	68	46
Our government exercises power in an acceptable way	71	60	24	19	50	49	35	29
Our constitution expresses the values and aspirations of the Zambian people.	65	67	30	25	50	55	49	30
Our government has the right to make decisions that all people have to abide by whether or not they agree with them.	48	46	25	24	35	43	32	26

Trust In State and Government Institutions

An attitude widely seen by social scientists to be closely related to legitimacy is a sense of trust in the occupants of political institutions. This is, again, related to the notion that citizens do not have to watch their leaders constantly, that they can trust them to act in their interests in the great majority of cases where democratic leaders are unable to canvass public opinion. The survey responses reveal that trust in the institutions of government varies quite drastically, both across institutions as well as across countries.

In South Africa, as well as across the region, the elected, political institutions of the Presidency, Parliament and Local Governments enjoy less trust than the more technocratic, more purely "state" institutions. *None* of these government institutions are trusted by an absolute majority of the public (which is also the case in every other country in the region with the exception of Malawi and Namibia).

Four in ten (41%) South Africans say they can trust President Mbeki to do what is right "most of the time" or "just about always." Just one-third (34%) say they trust parliament do to what is right "most of the time," or "just about always," Less than three in ten (28%) trust their provincial governments, and slightly more then one in five (23%) trust local government councils.

Trust in South Africa's Thabo Mbeki is in the same range as that for Malawi's Bakili Maluzi (50%), Botswana's Festus Mogae (44%) or Lesotho's Prime Minister Bethuel Mosisili (40%). It is far lower than the 73 percent of Namibians who said they trust President Sam Nujoma (which, not coincidentally the same level of trust given by South Africans to Nelson Mandela in a 1998 I*d*asa survey). It is far better than the 19 percent of Zimbabweans who trust President Robert Mugabe.

While South Africans' trust in local government councils and Parliament is quite low, this is true across the region where either institution consistently is the *least* trusted institution in each country.

South Africa's less partisan institutions do enjoy higher levels of popular trust than its political institutions, the margin of improvement is not nearly as large as in several other countries.

Six in ten say they can trust institutions of the media. Sixty two percent trust the South African Broadcasting Corporation and 58 percent say they trust the press or newspapers, the two highest levels of trust enjoyed by any institution in the country. The State Broadcaster is the most trusted institution in Namibia and Lesotho, and is trusted by an average of 60 percent across all countries.

All other state institutions are trusted by less than one half the public: the Independent Electoral Commission (49%), South African Defence Force (44%), Courts of Law (43%), the overall criminal justice system (38%), and the South African Police Service (35%). By way of comparison, the army is the most trusted institution in Botswana, Malawi and Zimbabwe, and is trusted by 59 percent across all countries. In every country except Namibia, Lesotho, and South

Africa, it is one of the three most trusted institutions, and in every country with the exception of South Africa and Lesotho, it is trusted by a majority of the public.

Trust In Institutions Across Southern Africa (2000)

	Botswana	Zimb	Zambia	Malawi	Lesotho	Namibia	South Africa
The President / Prime Minister	43.6	19.4	37.4	50.0	40.4	72.5	41.3
Parliament	46.2	17.0	23.1	32.8	29.7	50.7	33.7
Provincial Government	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	27.6
Your local government	41.3	28.1	20.4	NA	18.2	47.3*	22.6
The Army	71.2	52.2	53.3	71.1	39.2	66.0	43.9
The police	60.0	35.5	37.5	41.7	40.4	68.9	35.0
Courts of law	64.3	42.2	63.6	47.1	42.2	63.6	43.3
Criminal Justice System	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	38.2
Electoral Commission	54.1	25.9	44.5	49.0	31.6	65.8	48.7
State Broadcasting Corporation	70.8	40.0	57.5	56.2	52.7	84.0	62.4
Government Press / Newspapers	67.2	31.1	46.9	34.5	36.6	NA	NA
Independent Press / Newspapers	62.1	42.2	43.2	36.3	32.3	62.0	58.4

(For President, Parliament, and Local Government,: *"How much of the time can you trust _____ to do what is right? Is it never, only some of the time, most of the time, just about always, or haven't you heard enough about him / it to know?"* For others: *"What about the following institutions? How much of the time can you trust them to do what is right? Is it never, only some of the time, most of the time, just about always, or don't you know enough about them to know?"*
(% "Always" ' "Most of the time")
* Namibia (n = 1060)

A factor analysis of the responses to these items reveals two underlying dimensions, one tapping trust in political institutions (Local Government, Parliament, and President) and another expressing trust in state institutions (Army, Police, Courts, Electoral Commission and State Broadcaster). We then constructed an index summarizing public trust toward each of these sets of institutions. The differing mean scores convey the significantly higher levels of trust in apolitical, state institutions (2.8 on a scale of 1 to 4) than partisan, political institutions (2.4). South Africa falls near the bottom of each scale, with only Zimbabweans less trusting of their institutions.

Trust In State Institutions Index

Country of Respondent	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Namibia	3.13	937	.6891
Botswana	2.99	809	.6488
Malawi	2.72	1009	.8892
Zambia	2.65	773	.6516
Lesotho	2.62	651	.9030
South Africa	2.48	1756	.6736
Zimbabwe	2.34	750	.7923
Total	2.69	6705	.6736

For South Africa, mean score also includes ratings of "Overall Criminal Justice System."

Trust In Political Institutions Index

Country of Respondent	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Namibia	2.90	801	.7205
Botswana	2.59	739	.7427
Malawi*	2.44	1122	.8472
Lesotho	2.46	384	.9392
Zambia	2.12	988	.6832
South Africa	2.21	1815	.6809
Zimbabwe	1.91	934	.7133
Total	2.31	5663	.7850

For Malawi, mean only reports average trust in President and Parliament. For all other countries, mean represents average score for trust in President, Parliament and Local Government. Total excludes Malawi.

Within South Africa, trust in institutions is highest among black and coloured respondents, and lowest among white and Indians; in fact, Indians' trust in government institutions is abysmally low. However, trust in virtually every institution we have measured since 1995 (Local government, Provincial Government, Parliament, President) has decreased significantly since 1998 within each race group.

Trust In Institutions (by Race)

	Black	White	Coloured	Indian
The President	48	17	33	4
Parliament	39	11	30	7
The government of this province	32	9	29	4
Your local government	25	11	22	14
The Army	47	37	31	22
The police	36	32	35	13
Courts of law	47	33	37	15
Criminal Justice System	43	25	29	5
Electoral Commission	55	27	43	13
State Broadcasting Corporation	67	50	52	37
Independent Press / Newspapers	60	52	57	42

% Just About Always / Most of the time

Trust In the President (1997-2000)

	June / July 1997	November 1998	July / Aug 2000
Total	61	73	41
Black	70	84	48
White	25	36	17
Coloured	47	49	33
Indian	27	44	4

% Just About Always / Most of the time

Trust In Parliament (1995-2000)

	Sept / Nov 1995	June / July 1997	November 1998	July / Aug 2000
Total	45	42	57	34
Black	53	50	70	39
White	24	13	18	11
Coloured	33	27	32	30
Indian	31	20	26	7

% Just About Always / Most of the time

Trust In Provincial Government By Province (1995-2000)

	Sept / Nov 1995	June / July 1997	November 1998	July / Aug 2000
Gauteng	35	42	44	28
Mpumalanga	57	43	75	19
Northern Province	30	50	57	35
North West	42	39	64	41
KwaZulu / Natal	21	28	39	22
Free State	47	49	48	45
Eastern Cape	24	28	52	20
Northern Cape	38	21	61	20
Western Cape	32	33	35	27
Total	32	37	49	28

% Just About Always / Most of the time

Trust In Local Government (1995-2000)

	Sept / Nov 1995*	Sept / Nov 1995**	June / July 1997	November 1998	July / Aug 2000
Total	16	33	31	39	23
Black	9	41	35	44	25
White	36	14	19	23	11
Coloured	21	26	23	28	22
Indian	13	14	14	21	14

% Just About Always / Most of the time
* View of Old Apartheid Era Local Government
** Expectation of New Town Councils

Perceptions of Democratic Governance

In a new democracy, whether or not people feel that their political system is legitimate and trustworthy may have a lot to do with two specific perceptions. First, how do people think their government is performing its representative role? To what degree are the incumbents of state offices responsive to public opinion? Second, to what extent do people think their institutions produce what is now widely know as "good governance": that is, to what extent are state institutions seen as free of corruption?

Government Responsiveness to Public Opinion

In order to measure people's perceptions of the extent of government responsiveness to public opinion, we asked people "how interested" they felt the President, Parliament, Provincial and Local Government was "in what happens to you or hearing what people like you think?"

Just under half (46%) of South Africans feel the President is "interested" or "very interested" in "what happens to you or hearing what people like you think." Forty one percent feel that Parliament is similarly responsive to public opinion. Just over one third (37%) feel that way about their provincial government. Finally, less than a third (31%) say their local government councils are interested or very interested in hearing what they think.

This is an interesting inversion of the common wisdom that glorifies local government as that government "closest to the people." Yet this pattern, with the President seen as the most responsive institution and local government as the least, also occurs in Botswana and Namibia. Beside South Africa, Presidents are ranked as the most responsive institution in Zambia, Malawi and Namibia. Only in Lesotho is local government seen by a majority of voters as responsive.

Only in Malawi and Namibia do we find large majorities who feel that any of their political institutions are responsive to public opinion, yet South Africans' assessments of the democratic performance of their institutions consistently rank behind Botswana and on some items, behind Zambia.

Government Responsiveness to Public Opinion Across Southern Africa

	Botswana	Zim	Zambia	Malawi	Lesotho	Namibia	South Africa
How interested do you think the President is in what happens to you or hearing what people like you think?	53.2	25.4	46.0	62.7	40.2	78.2	45.7
How interested do you think parliament is in what happens to you or hearing what people like you think? Are they:	56.4	25.8	35.9	47.1	32.3	59.0	41.4
How interested do you think your local councillor is in what happens to you or hearing what people like you think? Is he/she	47.2	37.6	43.6	NA	59.0	48.6	30.5

How interested do you think the _____ is in what happens to you or hearing what people like you think? Is he / it not at all interested, not very interested, interested, very interested, or haven't you heard enough about him / it to know?
(% "Very interested" / "Interested")
* Namibia (n = 1065)

A reliable index of perceived responsiveness to public opinion based on responses to these questions reveals that Namibians (3.0) are most likely to feel that their political institutions are responsive to public opinion, followed by Botswana (2.8) and Malawi (2.7). South Africa (2.3) is ranked next to last, along with Zambia (2.2), and both do better than only Zimbabwe (2.0).

Responsiveness of Political Institutions Index

Country of Respondent	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Namibia	2.96	782	.6978
Botswana	2.78	651	.6839
Malawi*	2.65	1121	.8587
Lesotho	2.40	576	1.0123
South Africa	2.25	1781	.7500
Zambia	2.24	941	.7991
Zimbabwe	2.00	934	.7660
Total*	2.38	5667	.8368

For Malawi, mean only reports average responsiveness of President and Parliament. For all other countries, mean represents average score for trust in President, Parliament and Local Government.

In general, black South Africans are much more likely to feel that government institutions are interested in what they think or in what happens to them, than are white, coloured or Indian respondents. And with few exceptions, perceptions of government responsiveness have declined considerably since 1998 with regard to each institution and among respondents of all races.

Presidential Responsiveness (1997 – 2000)

	June / July 1997	November 1998	July / Aug 2000
Total	62	72	46
Black	74	86	54
White	21	30	16
Coloured	35	42	30
Indian	18	39	13

% "Interested / Very Interested"

Parliamentary Responsiveness (1995-2000)

	Sept / Nov 1995	June / July 1997	November 1998	July / Aug 2000
Total	48	46	59	42
Black	57	56	73	48
White	25	12	16	17
Coloured	35	21	30	36
Indian	30	9	22	6

% "Interested / Very Interested"
* % "Agree / Strongly Agree" That Institution Has A "Good Idea" What People Like You Think

Provincial Government Responsiveness By Province

	Sept / Nov 1995	June / July 1997	November 1998	July / Aug 2000
Gauteng	45	44	44	36
Mpumalanga	52	46	77	28
Northern Province	73	47	55	43
North West	49	43	67	53
KwaZulu / Natal	50	35	45	38
Free State	52	46	50	58
Eastern Cape	36	32	59	30
Northern Cape	35	29	61	19
Western Cape	33	26	39	26
Total	48	39	52	37

% "Interested / Very Interested"
% "Agree / Strongly Agree" That Institution Has A "Good Idea" What People Like You Think

Local Government Responsiveness to Public Opinion

	Sept / Nov 1995*	Sept / Nov 1995*	June / July 1997	November 1998	July / Aug 2000
Total	43	58	36	45	31
Black	46	72	42	51	33
White	39	25	18	26	19
Coloured	32	39	22	34	32
Indian	31	27	10	24	25

% "Interested / Very Interested"
* % "Agree / Strongly Agree" That Old Apartheid Era Town Councils Had A "Good Idea" What People Like You Think
** "Agree / Strongly Agree" That New Local Councils would Have A Good Idaa What People Like You Think

Corruption

The other key evaluation that may shape perceptions of government legitimacy and trustworthiness is the sense that government officials are involved in corruption. We defined corruption for respondents as "where those in government and the civil service take money or gifts from the people and use it for themselves, or expect people to pay them money or a gift to do their job." Then we asked respondents how many officials in various institutions and levels of government they felt were involved in corruption. We want to emphasize that this question only measures *perceptions* of official corruption and is not itself a measure of the actual extent of unethical behaviour in government (see the following section on *Personal Experience With Government Corruption*).

One half (50%) of South Africans think that "most" or "almost all" government officials are involved in corruption. Forty-five percent say the same about Members of Parliament. A similar 45 percent say that members of provincial government are involved in corruption. Fifty percent say that most or almost all civil servants are involved in corruption. And finally, 46 percent have a negative perception of corruption in their local government councils.

Perceptions of significant corruption in government are significantly higher in South Africa than Malawi, Botswana, Lesotho and Namibia. In fact, negative perceptions of corruption are almost twice as high in South Africa as in Namibia.

Perceptions of Government Corruption

	Botswana	Zim	Zambia	Malawi	Lesotho	Namibia	South Africa
How many officials in the Government do you think are involved in corruption? READ OUT	31.9	69.0	51.4	42.5	27.9	19.6	50.1
What about corruption? How many people in parliament do you think are involved in corruption? Is it: READ OUT	28.9	63.0	39.5	30.8	20.3	18.9	45.1
How many civil servants, or those who work in government offices and ministries do you think are involved in corruption. Is it: READ OUT	31.5	65.3	49.7	45.9	29.9	24.4	50.0
What about corruption? How many officials in your local government do you think are involved in corruption?	20.1	50.8	42.0	NA	10.9	17.2*	46.1

"What about corruption? (Corruption is where those in government and the civil service take money or gifts from the people and use it for themselves, or expect people to pay them extra money or a gift to do their job)."
(% "Almost All" / "Most-A Lot")
*Namibia (n = 1034)

Based on the results in the table above as well as a scale that reliably summarises perceptions of corruption across institutions, we see that Zimbabweans have especially cynical views of the integrity of their political leaders. Anywhere from one-half to seven-in-ten Zimbabweans feel that "all / almost all" or "most" officials are corrupt. They have an average score of 3.2 on a four-point scale (where 1 is the belief that no officials are involved in corruption and 4 the belief that all officials are corrupt). Zambians are also fairly cynical about their leaders where anywhere from four-in-ten to one-half of people think most or almost all officials are corrupt, and have an average of 2.9 out of 4. South Africans place next at 2.7. Namibians have the most optimistic view of their leaders (2.2 on a scale of 4). Yet even here, between one-fifth and one-fourth of Namibians say that almost all or most officials in government, parliament, the civil service, and local government are involved in corruption.

Perceived Corruption In Political Institutions Index

Country of Respondent	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Zimbabwe	3.20	828	.6815
Zambia	2.89	716	.7521
South Africa	2.70	1677	.6802
Malawi*	2.54	823	.6749
Botswana	2.41	541	.6559
Lesotho	2.41	310	.7156
Namibia	2.18	618	.6972
Total*	2.69	4692	.7560

For Malawi, mean only reports average perceived corruption in Government, Parliament and Civil Service. For all other countries, mean represents average score for perceived corruption in Government, Parliament, Civil Service, and Local Government. Total excludes Malawi.

It is noteworthy that there are much smaller and much less consistent racial differences in perceptions of official corruption than we see on many other questions of politics and economics.

Also of interest is the fact that while in many other areas, South Africans' perceptions of their political system have become decidedly more negative, perceptions of corruption have remained constant, and in some places improved slightly.

Government Officials

	Sept / Nov 1995	June / July 1997	July / Aug 2000
Total	46	50	50
Black	48	49	47
White	48	61	67
Coloured	31	39	42
Indian	35	48	73

% "Almost All / Most, A Lot"

Civil Servants

	November 1998	July / Aug 2000
Total	55	50
Black	52	48
White	66	64
Coloured	51	35
Indian	65	65

% "Almost All / Most, A Lot"

Parliament

	June / July 1997	November 1998	July / Aug 2000
Total	41	44	45
Black	39	40	42
White	58	59	61
Coloured	36	41	35
Indian	42	56	78

% "Almost All / Most, A Lot"

Provincial Government

	June / July 1997	November 1998	July / Aug 2000
Gauteng	44	51	43
Mpumalanga	32	35	63
Northern Province	51	56	44
North West	38	47	29
KwaZulu / Natal	49	64	53
Free State	36	54	19
Eastern Cape	64	63	63
Northern Cape	35	48	40
Western Cape	28	23	29
Total	45	53	45

% "Almost All / Most, A Lot"

Local Government

	June / July 1997	November 1998	July / Aug 2000
Total	44	53	46
Black	47	58	47
White	42	43	53
Coloured	25	33	25
Indian	28	46	56

Personal Experience With Government Corruption

Where do these perceptions come from? While a full exploration of this question was beyond the scope of this project, the Southern African Democracy Barometer did make some initial forays into this question by asking about the most obvious possibility: that is, do negative perceptions of government corruption stem from personal experience with, or victimization by such behaviour? Thus we asked people whether, in the past year, they had been forced to pay a bribe, give a gift or perform some favour in order to get various forms of government welfare.

Two percent of South Africans say they have had to "pay money to government officials (besides paying rates or taxes), give them a gift, or do them a favour," in order to get assistance finding employment. A similar portion (2%) have encountered corruption while trying to get a government maintenance payment, pension payment, or loan. Over double that amount (7%) say they have had to pay a bribe or do a favour in order to get electricity or water. Also of note, obtaining electricity / water is the only area in which a large number or people say it happens "often" (4%), suggesting that this problem occurs as much in the area of rates collection as with regard to obtaining initial hook-ups. Finally, 4 percent of South Africans say they have personally encountered government corruption in the area of housing or land. Over half of these cases are reported to occur "often" suggesting that a large portion of corruption may occur in areas involving sustained relations with government, such as paying rent for council houses.

These results clearly indicate that perceptions of corruption are only tenuously linked to actual personal experience with corruption. In South Africa, perceptions of corruption are anywhere from seven to twenty-five times higher than reported experience with corruption. Elsewhere, it runs from four times as high (in Namibia) to forty times higher (in Botswana).

To what, then, can we attribute these widely negative perceptions? They could stem from respondents having heard about their friends' and neighbors' experiences with corruption and bribery or from their exposure to media reports of a smaller number of high profile incidences of corruption. Or they simply could be the result of excessive cynicism about official behaviour. Answering these questions will require further analysis of these results, as well as gathering new data in specially designed surveys focusing on corruption.

Personal Experience With Government Corruption Across Southern Africa

	Botswana	Zim	Zambia	Malawi	Lesotho	Namibia	South Africa
A job	1.0	9.5	5.1	4.5	6.1	2.8	2.1
A government maintenance payment, pension payment or loan	0.5	13.1	3.3	3.5	2.2	4.4	2.1
Electricity or water	0.4	11.3	2.6	2.6	1.3	6.8	7.0
Housing or land	0.7	14.0	3.4	2.9	2.4	8.0	3.7

In the past year, have you or anyone in your family had to pay money to government officials (besides paying rates or taxes), give them a gift, or do them a favour, in order to get the following?
(% '"Once or Twice," / "A Few Times" / "Often")

Botswana exhibits by far the lowest incidence of corruption (at least with regard to the areas we asked about). Only one-out-of-every-one-hundred Batswana say they had to pay a bribe in order to get help finding a job, and even less in other areas. In contrast, reported experience with corruption and bribery is ten times higher in Zimbabwe where an average of one-out-of-ten Zimbabweans say they were subjected to corruption in these areas.

Personal Experience with Corruption Index

Country of Respondent	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Zimbabwe	1.22	1151	.5693
Namibia	1.10	1142	.3698
Malawi	1.06	1202	.2604
South Africa	1.07	2183	.2784
Zambia	1.06	1130	.2847
Lesotho	1.05	1130	.2296
Botswana	1.01	1156	.1738
Total	1.08	9094	.3310

Racial breakdowns of the data suggest that black people are most likely to encounter demands for bribes or favours in the areas of employment and welfare payments. However, both whites and blacks are equally likely (given the margins of sampling error) to run into these problems in the areas of services, housing and land.

On a provincial basis, employment related corruption appears to occur most often in Mpumalanga (5%), and Northwest (4%). Corruption in welfare is reported most frequently in Eastern Cape (5%) and Free State (4%). With regard to services, corruption is especially high in KwaZulu / Natal (11%), Gauteng (11%) Free State (10%) and Mpumalanga (9%). People are most likely to have to pay bribes or do favours to get assistance finding housing and land in Gauteng (6%), Mpumalanga (6%) and Eastern Cape (5%).

Personal Experience With Corruption In South Africa (by Race)

	Total	Black	White	Coloured	Indian
A job	2	3	1	0	0
A government maintenance payment, pension payment or loan	2	3	1	0	0
Electricity or water	7	7	9	2	0
Housing or land	4	4	6	2	0

Personal Experience With Corruption In South Africa (by Province)

	Gauteng	KwaZulu Natal	Eastern Cape	Western Cape	Northern Province	North West	Free State	Mpuma langa	Northern Cape
A job	1	2	2	0	2	4	1	5	0
Government maintenance payment, pension payment or loan	2	1	5	0	1	2	4	3	0
Electricity or water	11	11	5	2	1	2	10	9	0
Housing or land	6	3	5	1	1	2	4	6	0

Job Performance and Delivery

A final important area of citizens' evaluations of the political system are their opinions about how the government is doing it job, both generally as well as in specific performance areas. The Southern African Democracy Barometer has measured this in its most general form (general approval / disapproval of how political institutions have performed their job over the past year) as well as in more specific areas (how well government has performed in a number of specific policy areas).

General Government Performance

We begin by reporting the responses to our question about general impressions of how well the President, Parliament and Local Government had "performed their job over the past twelve months?"

In July / August 2000, one half (50%) of all South Africans said they "approve" or "strongly approve" of the way President Mbeki had handled his job over the previous twelve months. Forty-five percent said they approved the way Parliament had performed its job. Four in ten (39%) each approved of the job performance of their provincial government and provincial Premier. Finally, less than one-third (31%) approved of the job done by their local government councils in the previous year.

As in South Africa, the President receives the strongest approval ratings in five of the other six countries surveyed. Only in Botswana does the Parliament receive the highest ratings (64% approval), about five percentage points above that of the President. The most favourable rating goes to Namibia's Nujoma (79%), a result echoing the 79% approval given by South Africans to Nelson Mandela the last time I*d*asa asked the question in this form in November 1998.

The rest of the regions' Chief Executive approval ratings fall in a much less stratospheric plane of orbit with Zambia's Chiluba at 64%, Malawi's Muluzi at 63%, Botswana's Mogae at 57%, Mbeki at 50% and Lesotho's head of government Bethuel Mosisili at 49%. By far, Zimbabweans gave the worst ratings to Robert Mugabe where less than one-in-five approved of his performance in the previous year (21%).

In every country, except Zimbabwe, local government receives the *worst* job performance ratings.

Institutional Job Approval Across Southern Africa

	Botswana	Zim	Zambia	Malawi	Lesotho	Namibia	South Africa
President	56.9	21.1	63.7	63.0	49.2	78.6	50.2
Parliament	64.1	18.1	46.3	47.5	38.2	64.2	45.3
Local Government	53.9	32.6	38.6	NA	38.1	57.3*	31.4

What about the way the _____ has performed his / its job over the past twelve months?
(% "Strongly Approve"/ "Approve")
*Namibia N = 1046

Namibians give their political institutions the highest job performance evaluations in the region (3.1 on a 4 point scale, where 1 is strongly disapprove and 4 is strongly approve). Among those who offer an opinion, the average response of Zambia (2.) falls below the midpoint (of 2.5). With the exception of Zimbabwe, South Africans join Zambians in giving the lowest performance ratings in the region.

General Job Approval Index

Country of Respondent	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Namibia	3.07	735	.6616
Botswana	2.83	730	.6074
Malawi*	2.62	1098	.8527
Lesotho	2.60	335	1.0176
South Africa	2.36	1704	.6978
Zambia	2.44	961	.7156
Zimbabwe	1.89	884	.7280
Total*	2.48	5350	.7980

For Malawi, mean only reports average job approval for Government, Parliament, and Civil Service. For all other countries, mean represents average job approval score for Government, Parliament, Civil Service, and Local Government. Total excludes Malawi.

Presidential Performance Ratings

Seasoned observers of South African politics will no doubt notice that President Mbeki's present job performance ratings fall far below those routinely recorded by his predecessor Nelson Mandela. Using Markinor's question which asks people "how well" the President had been handling his job, at no point from 1995 to 1999 did less than 74% say "fairly" or "very well."

However, before one jumps to any facile conclusions based on this simple comparison, there are a range of factors to consider. First of all, performance, trust and responsiveness ratings for *all* South Africa's elected institutions have decreased since 1998. Second, President Mbeki does presently enjoy majority support among the entire electorate. Third, his present ratings fall within the same broad range of support enjoyed by other Chief Executives in Southern Africa (as well as those generally obtained by American Presidents or British Prime Ministers). Third, it is instructive that only President Sam Nujoma stands far above the rest in his ratings on trust, responsiveness and performance (and does so at levels that Nelson Mandela received during his term of office from South Africans). This suggests that Mandela and Nujoma, due to their stature as Founding Fathers, are so different, what pollsters might call "statistical outliers," that straight comparisons with them might lead analysts in the wrong direction.

In one sense, these ratings for President Mbeki suggest that South Africa in the post-Mandela era may have moved from the politics of transition, to normal politics where Presidents and the government they run do not automatically command widespread support across the electorate.

Presidential Job Approval

	Sept / Nov 1995	June / July 1997	November 1998	July / Aug 2000
Total	76	64	79	50
Black	85	73	89	56
White	54	31	45	25
Coloured	61	52	64	48
Indian	59	33	45	9

% "Approve / Strongly Approve'

At the same time, there are indications that support for the President has been slipping in the very recent past. In November 1999, Markinor's Omnibus survey found 73 percent who said Mbeki was handling his job "fairly" or "very well," and as recently as June / July 2000 had it at 66 percent.[8] The SADB found 50% who "approve" or "strongly approve" in July / August. In an August survey, Research Surveys Omnicheck survey conducted in metropolitan areas found that 46 percent of black women said that the President was "doing a good job." This represented a decline of 10 percentage points from the 56 percent measured in July, and of 23 percentage points from the 69 percent measured as recently as February 2000. Among white males, the proportions fell from 24 to 13 percent over the same period, and among white females, from 24 to 11 percent. Thus, beside the caveats expressed above, some significant shifts do seem to be taking place in public views of government.

Parliamentary Job Approval

	Sept / Nov 1995	June / July 1997	November 1998	July / Aug 2000
Total	53	46	64	45
Black	63	55	78	51
White	24	13	20	20
Coloured	39	31	41	42
Indian	48	24	37	16

% "Approve / Strongly Approve'

Provincial Government Job approval Ratings (by Province)

	Sept / Nov 1995	June / July 1997	November 1998	July / Aug 2000
Gauteng	66	44	49	37
Mpumalanga	79	46	72	31
Northern Province	91	40	70	52
North West	90	39	58	54
KwaZulu / Natal	74	26	48	34
Free State	86	54	57	64
Eastern Cape	87	25	57	33
Northern Cape	74	38	63	27
Western Cape	59	32	53	33
Total	76	36	56	39

% "Approve / Strongly Approve'

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[8] We would like to thank Mari Harris of Markinor for providing this data.

Provincial Premier Job Approval

	November 1998	July / Aug 2000
Gauteng	40	34
Mpumalanga	63	31
Northern Province	61	54
North West	52	55
KwaZulu / Natal	48	33
Free State	45	64
Eastern Cape	49	34
Northern Cape	56	38
Western Cape	41	30
Total	49	39

% "Approve / Strongly Approve'

Provincial Premier Performance Ratings

	July 1999	November 1999	May 2000	July 2000
Gauteng	36	47	43	42
Mpumalanga	47	48	45	39
Northern Province	67	56	54	37
North West	52	51	50	43
KwaZulu / Natal	31	34	31	42
Free State	56	74	70	72
Eastern Cape	50	66	42	42
Northern Cape	72	66	47	63
Western Cape	37	41	45	41

"How well do you think President Nelson Mandela is performing his job?"
% "Well / Very Well"
Source: Markinor

Local Government Job Approval

	June / July 1997	November 1998	Aug / Sept 2000
Total	30	44	31
Black	32	47	34
White	21	31	21
Coloured	27	46	33
Indian	19	29	22

% "Approve / Strongly Approve'

Specific Government Performance

The Southern African Democracy Barometer also asked people to give separate judgements on government performance across a wide range of government policy areas. Across the region, the results reveal a tremendous amount of variation in how people evaluate government performance.

In South Africa, the results indicate that as of July / August 2000, government was receiving increasingly negative responses across almost all policy areas. On only two issues (delivering basic services like water and electricity – 61%, and building houses – 50%) does the South African government receive positive performance ratings. In three issue areas, it receives positive ratings from less than one-in-five voters (Creating Jobs – 10%, Controlling Prices – 17% and Reducing Crime – 18%).

At the same time, it is important to remember that Southern Africans in general have not been overly enthusiastic about the performance of their government on specific issues throughout the 1999 / 2000 survey period. In only one country (Botswana) does the government receive a positive rating from popular ratings on most issues. Across countries, an average of more than 50 percent give positive ratings to their government in only two of nine issue areas.

South Africa also mirrors the rest of the region in that the provision of education, water and electricity, and health services tend to be three of the most popular policy areas in each country. And in each country, including South Africa, controlling inflation is one of the three most unpopular performance areas. Housing, job creation and economic management also tend to receive the next most negative responses across the region.

Specific Government Performance Ratings Across Southern Africa

	Botswana	Zim	Zambia	Malawi	Lesotho	Namibia	South Africa
Creating jobs	51.6	20.1	26.0	30.8	38.3	47.1	10.2
Building houses	43.7	25.9	35.6	38.2	11.8	58.1	49.6
Ensuring that prices remain stable	41.0	14.2	28.0	7.8	19.8	37.6	17.3
Reducing crime	63.1	31.0	34.6	21.9	43.6	46.3	17.9
Improving health services	69.4	34.8	36.9	45.7	50.1	62.1	42.6
Addressing the educational needs of all _____s	70.9	45.8	42.6	62.1	56.5	61.6	49.4
Managing the economy	60.4	15.9	32.6	25.2	35.5	45.4	27.5
Delivering basic services like water and electricity	69.4	36.2	39.9	65.4	35.0	54.6	60.7
Making sure everyone has enough land	57.1	21.7	49.1	50.6	32.1	38.7	37.7

Now let's speak about the present government of this country. How well would you say the government is handling the following matters? Would you say very well, fairly well, not very well or not at all well, or haven't you heard enough about this to have an opinion?
(% "fairly well / very well")

The government of Botswana receives the most consistently favourable ratings, getting a positive rating from popular majorities on seven of nine issue areas (and receives an average of 2.7 on a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 is not at all well, and 4 is very well). Namibia actually receives a slightly higher index score, but only because this score excludes the considerable number of Namibians who did not offer an opinion. In all other countries, including South Africa, the average score of those who offer an opinion falls below the midpoint of 2.5. As with other evaluations of the political system, Zimbabweans are extremely negative.

Specific Job Performance Index

Country of Respondent	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Namibia	2.70	647	.6570
Botswana	2.65	873	.5866
Malawi	2.17	1025	.6823
Zambia	2.17	1014	.6948
South Africa	2.10	1992	.6033
Lesotho	2.06	556	.9219
Zimbabwe	1.84	967	.5947
Total	2.20	7074	.7117

As the following tables reveal, we added several unique questions onto the South Africa survey that were not asked in the other SADB countries, including affirmative action, corruption, nation-building, income redistribution, welfare payments, HIV / AIDS, and South Africa's response to the situation in Zimbabwe. On all but one of these issues, black respondents give government the highest performance ratings.

Specific Government Performance Ratings In South Africa (by Race)

	Total	Black	White	Coloured	Indian
Creating jobs	10	11	6	8	4
Building houses	50	54	41	34	22
Ensuring that prices remain stable	17	20	7	11	2
Reducing crime	18	22	3	10	2
Improving health services	43	51	13	31	4
Addressing the educational needs of all South Africans	49	59	18	33	4
Managing the economy	28	31	14	23	9
Delivering basic services like water and electricity	61	61	56	66	50
Making sure everyone has enough land	38	38	35	44	18
Affirmative Action	48	53	33	36	20
Fighting Corruption in government	30	36	7	26	6
Uniting all South Africans into one nation	53	60	24	40	18
Narrowing the income gap between rich and poor	23	23	28	17	11
Distributing welfare payments to those that are entitled to it (such as old age pensions, disability payments, child maintenance grants)	53	61	27	37	9
Preventing the spread of HIV / AIDS	38	42	24	30	23
South Africa's response to the situation in Zimbabwe	41	47	16	31	21

While public evaluations of government performance vary sharply from issue to issue, we can more easily understand them if we look at five clusters of performance areas: economic growth, economic redistribution and equality, welfare and development, nation-building, and good government. The tables combine SADB data with past data contributed to the *Opinion '99* project by Markinor.

Economic Growth

	May-June 1995	Nov 1995	May/June 1996	Nov 1996	May/June 1997	Nov 1997	March 1998	Sept 1998	Oct Nov 1998	Feb / March 1999	April 1999	July 1999	Nov 1999	May 2000	July / Aug 2000
Creating Jobs	33	31	36	26	36	32	23	12	23	18	24	24	25	20	10
Controlling Prices	30	37	38	30	40	39	36	--	33	--	42	40	46	41	17
Encouraging Intl Investment	65	64	67	62	68	65	66	--	33	--	66	62	66	62	--
Managing Economy	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	22	37	41	47	47	51	50	28

Economic Redistribution and Equality

	May/June 1995	Nov 1995	May/June 1996	Nov 1996	May/June 1997	Nov 1997	March 1998	Oct/Nov 1998	April 1999	July 1999	Nov 1999	May 2000	July / Aug 2000
Narrowing Income Gap	43	46	52	47	52	53	45	57	59	55	59	50	23
Affirmative Action	53	53	58	55	62	60	43	63	64	--	63	58	48
Encouraging Gender Equality	59	66	71	72	73	77	73	77	79	76	75	70	--
Land	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	38

Welfare and Development

	May/June 1995	Nov 1995	May/June 1996	Nov 1996	May/June 1997	Nov 1997	March 1998	Sept 1998	Oct / Nov 1998	Feb/March 1999	April 1999	July 1999	Nov 1999	May 2000	July / Aug 2000
Education	61	64	70	60	67	69	52	47	55	--	64	60	65	63	49
Housing	34	36	38	32	44	52	47	53	54	54	61	62	65	55	50
Basic Services (Water /Electricity)	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	67	68	68	72	74	75	72	61
Basic Health Services	69	62	74	68	71	73	67	57	64	68	66	66	68	65	43
Welfare Payments	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	65	67	69	71	67	53
HIV / AIDS	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	38

Law and Order

	May-June 1995	Nov 1995	May/June 1996	Nov 1996	May/June 1997	Nov 1997	Mar 1998	Sept 1998	Oct/Nov 1998	Feb/Mar 1999	April 1999	July 1999	Nov 1999	May 2000	July/Aug 2000
Reducing Crime	42	40	45	31	41	40	31	17	27	19	26	32	28	36	18
Bringing the Police Force Closer to the Community	54	61	69	56	62	63	58	--	59	--	60	59	61	61	--
Ending Political Violence	53	50	52	49	60	59	62	--	53	--	62	63	65	66	--

South Africans' Views of Their Political System

Good Government

	Sept 1998	Oct / Nov 1998		April 1999	July 1999	Nov 1999	May 2000	Aug / Sept 2000
Fighting Corruption	26	37	--	44	45	48	42	30
Maintaining Transparency & Accountability	31	47	59	55	--	--	--	--
Appointing the right people to lead govt depts & agencies	28	46	--	50	49	53	46	--

Nation-Building

	May-June 1995	Nov 1995	May-June 1996	Nov 1996	May-June 1997	Nov 1997	March 1998	Sept 1998	Oct – Nov 1998	April 1999	July 1999	Nov 1999	May 2000	Aug / Sept 2000
Uniting all SAs Into One Nation	61	63	72	71	67	70	71	62	68	72	69	72	66	53

Finally, in our only question on foreign policy, 41 percent say the government has handled South Africa's response to the crisis in Zimbabwe "fairly well" or "very well."

Comparing Government in the Present Political System With the Past

In the same spirit as the Churchill Hypothesis that argues that citizens' relative comparisons of democracy with its alternatives are more important than their absolute assessments of democracy, government legitimacy in new democracies may depend less on absolute evaluations of things like trust and performance than on a relative comparison with government under the previous regime. We have already seen South Africans' views on their trust in government, their sense of responsiveness, perceptions of corruption, and policy effectiveness. Now we review responses to questions that ask people whether their present governments are *more or less* trustworthy, responsive, corrupt, and effective, than government under the previous regime.

In every case, with the exception of Lesotho, Southern Africans are more likely to feel that multi-party governments are more responsive and more effective than the previous authoritarian regime, than say it is more trustworthy, or less corrupt. Almost half (46%) of South Africans feel that government today is more responsive to public opinion than government under *apartheid*, and four in ten (40%) say it is more effective. Thirty seven percent say it is more trustworthy, but just over one quarter (27%) say it is less corrupt.

Comparisons With Previous Government

	Botswana	Zim	Zambia	Malawi	Lesotho	Namibia	South Africa
More Effective in the way it performs its job	44.9	23.4	46.4	53.0	34.4	49.5	39.6
More Interested in hearing what people like you think	42.7	31.7	43.0	58.1	37.1	53.5	45.8
Less Corrupt	22.2	19.4	27.4	29.4	36.1	41.0	27.4
More Trustworthy	29.9	20.8	33.1	47.2	35.6	47.5	36.6

You have told us how you feel about the effectiveness of the way government performs its job, its interest in what you think, corruption, and your trust in government. But how does this compare to the government that this country had _____? Is government today more, about the same or less _____as under [the previous regime]?
(% "Much More Effective" / "More Effective")
(% Much More Interested / More Interested")
(% Much Less Corrupt / Less Corrupt")
(% Much More Trustworthy / More Trustworthy")

Factor analysis demonstrates that perceptions of whether the present government is more effective, responsive and trustworthy than government under the former regime reflect a common underlying attitude or dimension. Significantly, perceptions of whether it is more or less corrupt are not related to the other three. Thus, we constructed an aggregate index summarising responses to these three items. Among those who offered an opinion, Batswana have the most positive comparisons of their present government with the government under the old regime (British colonialism). But Namibians, Malawians and even Basotho also tend to have more positive views of their new government when compared to the past (all with mean scores above the midpoint of 3 on the five point scale). In contrast, Zambians, and especially Zimbabweans, tend to give their present government relatively negative ratings compared to the old regime when it comes to performance, responsiveness and trust.

Comparing Government Under the Present System to the Old System

Country of Respondent	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Botswana	3.52	716	.9714
Namibia	3.43	1031	.9606
Malawi	3.21	1177	1.3140
Lesotho	3.08	913	1.5884
Zambia	2.95	1092	1.1596
Zimbabwe	2.58	1047	.9489
Total	3.11	5976	1.2228

There are large racial differences within South Africa on three of these questions. Significantly, much smaller differences surface on the question of whether government is more or less corrupt.

Comparing Government Under the Present System to the Old System (by Race)

	Total	Black	White	Coloured	Indian
More Effective in the way it performs its job	40	47	12	27	9
More Interested in hearing what people like you think	46	54	12	37	15
Less Corrupt	27	29	20	28	11
More Trustworthy	37	43	11	28	11

Should Government Be Able to Overcome Problems Inherited From the Past?

The old regime is important politically because existing multi-party government may be judged relative to the past. But the past is also an important factor because government often justify difficulties in achieving change and in delivery by referring to the problems inherited from the past, whether that past be colonialism, white minority rule, military rule or dictatorship. What do the citizens think? How much patience to they have with government under multi-party politics?

To what extent must it deliver now, and to what extent will people excuse failures or slowness in delivery due to the legacies of the past?

We offered people two statements, one stating that "it will take years for our system of government to deal with the problems inherited" from the past. The other states that the system of government should be able to address problems now "regardless of who caused them."

The results indicate that there is little sympathy anywhere in the region for government that excuse their own policy failures by blaming them on the past. At most, four-in-ten citizens in Namibia (41%) and South Africa (39%) agree that it might take years to deal with the problems of the past. But even in Namibia, almost one-half of the public agrees that the SWAPO government ought to be able to deal with the legacies of South African colonial *apartheid*, and in South Africa 58 percent say that their system of government ought be able to deal with the country's problems regardless of their origin. Elsewhere, majorities ranging from six-in-ten to seven-in-ten agree that their government ought to be able to deal with the legacies of the past now.

Should Government Be Able to Overcome Problems Inherited From the Past?

	Botswana	Zim	Zambia	Malawi	Lesotho	Namibia	South Africa
It will take years for our system of government to deal with the problems inherited from [the previous regime]	14.6	24.40	24.2	23.2	20.3	41.4	39.1
Our system of government ought to be able to deal with problems right now regardless of who caused them.	60.1	69.7	71.3	71.8	58.3	48.2	58.4
Don't' Know	16.9	3.2	1.7	1.8	14.4	10.1	
Agree With Neither	6.3	1.7	2.1	3.0	6.1	0.0	

While black South Africans are more likely to sympathize with the difficulties overcoming the legacies of *apartheid*, well over a majority (56%) feels that government ought to be able to address the country's problems.

Should Government Be Able to Overcome Problems Inherited From the Past?

	Total	Black	White	Coloured	Indian
It will take years for our system of government to deal with the problems inherited from [the previous regime]	39	43	29	27	13
Our system of government ought to be able to deal with problems right now regardless of who caused them.	58	56	62	72	81
Don't' Know	2	1	4	1	6
Agree With Neither	1	0	4	0	0

Most Important Problems: The People's Agenda

Now that we have seen how South Africans think their political systems has performed, and how its performance compares with previous governments, what exactly do people want government to do? We asked people "What are the most important problems facing this country that government should address?" We offered them no response options; their answers were

completely spontaneous, and they could give us up to three answers, which we transcribed verbatim. The tables below offer an after-the-fact aggregation of responses into similar categories. These tables offer us a concise description of citizens' priorities for government action, or what we have called "the people's agenda."

Most Important Problems (All Problems Mentioned by at least 10%)

Botswana	Zimbabwe	Zambia	Malawi	Lesotho	Namibia	South Africa
Job Creation (58%)	Economy (74%)	Health (41%)	Economy (48%)	Job Creation (63%)	Job Creation (54%)	Job Creation (76%)
AIDS (24%)	Job Creation (37%)	Job Creation (32%)	Health (29%)	Crime / Security (28%)	Education (46%)	Crime / Security (60%)
Education (20%)	Health (18%)	Education (31%)	Crime / Security (28%)	Food (20%)	General Services (21%)	Housing (25%)
Poverty / Destitution (17%)		Farming / Agriculture (26%)	Food (26%)		Health (18%)	Education (13%)
Health (15%)		Economy (20%)	Transportation (16%)		AIDS (14%)	AIDS (13%)
Farming / Agriculture (14%)		Transportation (18%)	Water (16%)			Health (12%)
Crime / Security (12%)		Poverty / Destitution (14%)	Farming / Agriculture (13%)			Poverty/ Destitution (11%)
			Education (12%)			Corruption (10%)
			Poverty / Destitution (11%)			
			Job Creation (11%)			
			General Services (10%)			

Most Important Problems (All Problems Mentioned)

	Botswana	Zim	Zambia	Malawi	Lesotho	Namibia	South Africa
Job Creation	58.4	37.4	31.8	10.9	63.4	54.1	75.6
Economy	7.0	74.2	19.7	47.6	3.1	7.3	8.8
Education	20.0	9.4	30.5	12.4	5.7	45.9	13.0
Crime and Security	12.3	6.2	8.5	28.0	27.6	0.7	59.9
Health	14.9	17.5	40.5	28.5	7.6	17.6	11.9
Poverty / Destitution	17.4	9.1	13.5	10.9	8.8	7.3	11.4
Farming / Agriculture	13.7	1.1	26.3	13.1	3.8	8.5	0.0
Food	1.7	7.5	8.4	25.5	19.8	4.2	0.7
AIDS	24.1	4.3	0.0	1.8	0.1	13.9	12.6
Water	3.5	8.9	8.5	15.5	7.3	0.0	6.2
Transportation	1.8	7.2	17.8	16.2	9.9	0.8	7.0
General Services	2.1	0.8	0.9	10.1	1.6	20.6	7.4
Welfare	7.6	2.1	3.2	2.4	4.1	6.0	3.0
Development	5.6	2.4	1.5	0.7	1.8	3.4	0.7
Wages	2.2	5.1	3.1	3.3	0.1	0.0	1.6
Housing	2.9	5.4	2.5	0.2	0.1	3.5	24.6
Corruption	2.6	3.7	1.8	4.8	1.5	2.4	9.9
Democracy	1.2	1.8	1.8	1.1	1.0	1.3	0.7
Traditional / Moral Values	2.5	7.6	0.0	0.8	0.2	1.1	0.2
Discrimination / Equality	2.2	3.3	0.5	0.9	0.4	3.3	4.2
Governance	2.6	2.5	2.0	1.4	0.6	1.0	1.3
Infrastructure	1.2	1.7	2.4	3.3	0.3	0.0	0.9
Violence	0.2	0.2	.0	0.0	0.4	0.9	2.3
Labour	1.2	0.4	1.5	0.6	0.1	0.0	0.4
Land	0.0	1.1	0.3	0.8	0.1	1.8	1.3
Rates / Taxes	0.1	1.7	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.0	1.0
Population Explosion	0.1	0.4	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.3
Electricity	0.6	0.7	2.0	0.7	1.1	0.0	4.7
Sanitation	0.0	0.3	0.8	0.1	0.7	0.0	0.5
Rights	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.2
Environment	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.1	0.0
Immigration	1.2	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.3	0.0	1.1
Inequality	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.1	0.0	0.0
National Unity	0.6	0.1	0.3	0.8	0.3	0.0	0.1
Political Violence	0.2	0.6	0.3	0.5	2.6	3.2	0.1
Political Tension	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.4	3.4	0.0	0.1
War (International)	0.5	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Traditional leaders	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0

What are the most important problems facing this country that government should address?

By and large, South Africans' agenda for government actions looks the same as it has for the past two years. For South Africans, issues of Job Creation and Unemployment, on one hand, and Crime and Security on the other, remain, by far, the fundamental issues in the eyes of the electorate, mentioned by large majorities as the most important issues facing the country. The most important new change is that, for the first time, HIV / AIDS was mentioned by over 10 percent of the public.

These are the problems currently mentioned by more that ten percent of the South African public.

- Job Creation (76%)
- Crime / Security (60%)
- Housing (25%)
- Education (13%)
- HIV / AIDS (13%)
- Health (12%)
- Poverty / Destitution (11%)
- Corruption (10%)

Most Important Problems Facing the Country That Government Ought to Address (South Africa)

	Sept / Oct 1994	Sept / Nov 1995	June / July 1997	September 1998	Oct / Nov 1998	Feb/March 1999	April 1999	July / Aug 2000
Job Creation	67	74	68	73	75	75	79	76
Crime and security	6	32	58	64	61	62	65	60
Housing	46	54	44	22	34	32	32	25
Education	34	20	20	24	23	28	26	13
Health Care	2	7	10	13	11	14	12	12
Water	0	5	4	6	13	13	11	6
Corruption	0	2	6	6	7	8	10	10
General Economy	21	10	8	18	16	12	10	9
Electricity	-	2	4	4	11	8	7	5
Poverty	9	6	3	9	12	7	9	11
Violence	49	32	8	8	5	4	4	2
Discrimination	19	4	2	2	4	4	3	4
Immigration	-	3	1	4	2	1	2	1
Political Violence	7	6	1	0	1	1	1	>1

"What are the most important problems facing this country that government ought to address?"

IV.
Democratic Citizenship In South Africa

While scholars may differ on exactly how active and involved citizens must be, nearly everyone agrees that, ultimately, sustainable democracies require citizens, and not subjects. A consolidated democracy is one where citizens not only believe that democracy is "the only game in town" but must do the types of things that support and sustain democratic practices, procedures and institutions.

The typical view of the democratic citizen is someone who is interested in politics, feels able and willing to interact with the political system when they need to, or when it is required of them. Ultimately, it is citizens who must stand up and defend an aspiring or young democracy when it is under threat (as seen over the past two decades in the Philippines and Russia). In contrast, the typical image of Africans is that they are "subjects" or "clients," but not citizens. They are usually seen as fatalistic about life in general, and disinterested and apathetic about politics and government (or at least, western forms of post-colonial government). Yet we know very little about how Africans actually feel about politics, and democratic politics specifically.

In this section we examine the extent to which South and Southern Africans are interested in politics, know who their leaders are, acquire news about politics through the media, and feel competent to play an active role in politics and able to have an impact on the political system. We also assess the frequency with which people are involved in community life, interact with the political system, protest, and comply with the duties and obligations of citizenship. Finally, we assess the potential for South and Southern Africans to defend their nascent democracies should they come under threat.

Political Interest and Political Knowledge

Interest In Politics

Do South Africans have sufficient interest in politics to play a meaningful role in a democratic system? To get at this question, we asked citizens how often they discuss politics with their friends as well as how often they follow politics and public affairs.

We find that South Africans are relatively disinterested in political affairs. In July / August 2000. Just 11 percent said they "frequently" engaged in political discussion with friends. One third (37%) say they "never" do this. Twelve percent said they followed government and public affairs "always" or "most of the time." One-fifth (22%) say they follow politics "hardly at all."

When compared with other countries in Southern Africa, the size of what could be called "very attentive" public is smaller in South Africa than the other countries we surveyed from mid 1999 to mid 2000. However, if we include the proportions who engage in political discussion or follow politics at least some of the time, South Africa falls roughly midway between the highest and lowest levels of political interest.

Frequency of Political Discussion Across Southern Africa

	Botswana	Zim	Zambia	Malawi	Lesotho	Namibia	South Africa
Frequently	14.2	25.1	14.3	18.6	12.6	19.8	10.6
Occasionally	37.0	37.8	40.1	45.1	26.8	41.0	52.0
Never	45.1	33.8	43.6	35.8	59.0	37.2	36.8

When you get together with your friends, would you say you discuss political matters...?

Attention to Politics Across Southern Africa

	Botswana	Zim	Zambia	Malawi	Lesotho	Namibia	South Africa
Always, Most of the time	14.7	20.6	22.2	17.5	31.0	18.1	11.9
Some of the time	22.8	27.1	32.4	31.7	17.4	49.0	37.2
Only now and then	20.8	16.8	16.9	29.5	20.4	14.2	27.6
Hardly at all	37.8	29.9	26.1	20.3	29.4	12.1	21.7

Some people seem to follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time, whether there's an election going on or not. Others aren't that interested. Would you say you follow what's going on in government and public affairs

After reducing the four point Attention to Politics scale to a three point scale (by collapsing the "some of the time" and "only now and then" categories into one middle category)[9] we are able to create a reliable index of political interest by combining it with the question on political discussion with a three point scale (where 1 equals very low levels of interest and 3 very high levels). On this scale, South Africans, Batswana and Basotho display the lowest average levels of interest in politics, and Namibians and Zimbabweans the highest.

Political Interest Scale

Country of Respondent	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Namibia	1.96	1072	.5179
Zimbabwe	1.92	1111	.6592
Malawi	1.90	1190	.5606
Zambia	1.84	1149	.5753
South Africa	1.81	2159	.5132
Lesotho	1.77	1144	.5973
Botswana	1.73	1116	.6140
Total	1.84	8941	.5783

Since 1997, the frequency of reported political discussion has remained fairly constant at these relatively low levels. While there has been greater fluctuation in people's attention to politics, it has also remained fairly constant. Neither item reveals any sustained increase in interest around the 1999 election campaign. An examination by racial group indicates far smaller racial differences than observed across many other indicators, however, there is evidence of very recent declines in interest among coloured and Indian respondents.

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[9] This does not appear to do any great violence to the variable as the three point scale correlates with highly with the four point scale (r = .94).

Frequency of Political Discussion In South Africa (1995 to 2000)

	Sept / Nov 1995	June / July 1997	September 1998	July / Aug 2000
Frequently	17	14	16	11
Occasionally	59	48	45	52
Never	23	37	37	37
Don't know	1	1	2	1

Attention to Politics In South Africa (1995 to 2000)

	Sept / Oct 1995	June / July 1997	September 1998	Feb / March 1999	April 1999	July / Aug 2000
Always, Most of the time	18	16	16	19	17	12
Some of the time	31	39	30	33	32	37
Only now and then	31	19	29	25	27	28
Hardly at all	18	25	20	16	18	22
Don't know	2	1	5	7	5	2

"Some people seem to follow what's going on in Government and public affairs most of the time, whether there's an election going on or not. Others aren't that interested. Would you say you follow what's going on in Government and public affairs…?"

Frequency of Political Discussion (By Race)

	Sept / Nov 1995	June / July 1997	September 1999	July / Aug 2000
Black	75	61	60	65
White	81	62	70	58
Coloured	69	60	54	55
Indian	72	71	63	42

% *Frequently* / Occasionally

Attention to Politics (By Race)

	Sept / Nov 1995	June / July 1997	September 1998	April 1999	July / Aug 2000
Black	45	54	43	50	51
White	59	59	62	48	49
Coloured	49	53	44	43	34
Indian	62	55	58	53	38

% Always / Some of the time

Political Knowledge

In order to gauge people's awareness of their formal political system, we asked them to tell us the names of the Vice / Deputy President, the Minister of Finance, the Member of Parliament for their constituency, and the name of their local councillor.

Almost six in ten (57%) South Africans could correctly give us the name of Deputy President Jacob Zuma. This is significantly lower than the proportions of Batswana (83%), Malawians (79%), Zimbabweans (73%) and Namibians (68%) who could do so with their Vice or Deputy President. It is slightly higher than the 55 percent of Zambians and significantly higher than the 41 percent of Basotho who could answer this question.

A far lower proportion (38%) could supply the name of Minister of Finance Trevor Manuel. But this trend is true all over the region even though the Finance Minister is arguable the second

most influential person in government throughout Southern Africa. However, South Africans are about as knowledgeable about this Minister as anyone in the region. At most, four in ten Zimbabweans (42%) could give the correct name, and as few as 14 percent of Batswana and 6 percent of Basotho could do so.[10]

Awareness of parliamentary representatives was also very high in two of the region's political systems that use the constituency system, ranging from seven to eight-in-ten in Malawi and Botswana. However, just over one-half of Zimbabweans could correctly identify the name of their Member of Parliament. In Namibia, which has a proportional representation system where MPs do not represent constituencies, we asked people whether they knew the name of their regional councillor in Namibia's system of regional government: only one-in-four Namibians knew the name of this person.

In order to examine whether awareness increases as government is brought closer to the people, we also asked people about their local government representative. Malawi does not yet have a system of elected local government. In Namibia which has local government in most populated areas, less than one-in-ten of those who lived in these areas knew the correct name of their councillor. However, the picture looked quite different in Zimbabwe and Botswana, where over one-half of respondents could name their councillor.

Political Knowledge

	Botswana	Zim	Zambia	Malawi	Lesotho	Namibia	South Africa
Vice President / Prime Minister	82.9	72.9	54.8	79.4	40.6	68.4	56.7
The Minister of Finance	14.3	41.9	25.3	26.3	6.1	35.7	37.8
Member of parliament for this constituency	73.2	54.0	33.1	84.2	0.8	20.2*	Not Available
Your local councillor	52.9	56.6	22.8	NA	9.7	6.5**	Not Available

Can you tell me who presently holds the following offices?
% Giving Right Answer ((Excludes all cases where it was not possible to determine whether the answer was right or wrong)
* Regional Councillor
** N = 619 (Excludes those Who Don't Live in Area With local Government)

While black South Africans are most likely to be able to give the name of Deputy President Zuma, whites are most able to come up with the name of Finance Minister Manuel.

Political Knowledge (by Race)

	Total	Black	White	Coloured	Indian
Deputy President Zuma					
Right Answer	57	64	33	38	57
Minister of Finance Manual					
Right Answer	38	44	53	40	38

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[10] In order to assess the accuracy of those South Africans who could hazard a guess about their local councillor, or a Member of Parliament who had been assigned to represent their area by a political party, we had to get lists of names from the parties and lcoal councils. At time of press, we still had not been able to obtain all the requested names after several months of efforts.

Media Use

One way that people can come to learn about their leaders and the broader political system is through the mass media. In order to establish the potential of the mass media to disseminate political information to citizens, we asked respondents how often they received news from radio, television, and newspapers.

Radio is the most widely accessible and used source of news by South and Southern Africans. 89 percent of South Africans say they get news about politics from radio at least a few times a week. Only 4 percent say they never do so. Almost three quarters (74%) get political news from television at least a few times a week; 16 percent never receive news from television. Finally, one half (50%) use newspapers at this frequency. 23 percent say they never receive news from papers. In each case, the frequency of use is higher in South Africa than any other country in the region.

Obtaining News About Politics From the Media

	Botswana	Zim	Zambia	Malawi	Lesotho	Namibia	South Africa
Radio							
Everyday / A Few Times A Week	81.3	75.7	66.6	74.7	55.0	85.5	89.4
Never	8.0	12.9	23.0	14.6	23.7	7.1	3.7
Television							
Everyday / A Few Times A Week	29.6	40.9	34.9	7.6	11.4	36.3	74.3
Never	50.8	37.0	58.3	86.2	77.6	52.2	16.0
Newspapers							
Everyday / A Few Times A Week	47.6	40.1	22.9	19.3	9.6	34.1	49.6
Never	31.7	32.3	58.3	60.8	67.9	44.5	23.6

The same is true of average frequency of use. While it was possible to construct one single scale out of all three items, we found that reliability increased significantly when the item on radio listenership was removed. This is probably due to two things. First of all, access to radio is much more widespread than the other two media, which gives it a quite different profile of users. Second, and not unrelated to the first, radio news is probably received quite differently than news from television and newspaper. It is probably more passive, in the sense that one can hear news throughout the day at work or wherever with the radio playing in the background. Receiving news from television and newspapers on the other hand probably requires a much greater effort on the part of viewers or readers to seek out news content. These scale scores confirm that the frequency of political news from all three media sources is highest in South Africa.

Average Radio Listenership

Country of Respondent	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
South Africa	3.51	2194	.9721
Namibia	3.36	1174	1.1480
Botswana	3.21	1189	1.2039
Zimbabwe	3.09	1180	1.4201
Malawi	3.03	1208	1.4574
Zambia	2.66	1181	1.6126
Lesotho	2.35	1174	1.6019
Total	3.08	9300	1.3821

Television – Newspaper Use Scale

Country of Respondent	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
South Africa	2.60	2186	1.3171
Zimbabwe	1.89	1156	1.5474
Botswana	1.67	1164	1.3682
Zambia	1.27	1165	1.4969
Namibia	1.54	1170	1.6027
Malawi	.66	1183	1.0642
Lesotho	.59	1163	1.0128
Total	1.58	9187	1.5302

The frequency with which people obtain political information from the radio has only now attained, and slightly passed the levels measured immediately after the 1994 election in I*d*asa's 1994 South African National Election Study. The proportions of people who frequently acquire political news from television and newspaper still lag significantly behind where it was in 1994.

Radio News Use (by Race)

	Sept / Oct 1994	Sept / Nov 1995	June / July 1997	July / Aug 2000
Black	89	80	87	90
White	76	56	78	90
Coloured	78	59	70	82
Indian	88	54	81	93

% Everyday / A Few Times A Week

TV News Use (by Race)

	Sept / Oct 1994	Sept / Nov 1995	June / July 1997	July / Aug 2000
Black	79	75	67	69
White	93	89	84	93
Coloured	89	84	87	89
Indian	96	81	95	98

% Everyday / A Few Times A Week

Newspaper News Use (by Race)

	Sept / Oct 1994	Sept / Nov 1995	June / July 1997	July / Aug 2000
Black	62	55	41	45
White	85	63	59	73
Coloured	77	63	59	50
Indian	94	67	77	69

% Everyday / A Few Times A Week

Political Competence and Efficacy

While interest and information are clearly important aspects of an active democratic citizenry, another important element is what social scientists describe as a feeling of "political

competence," by which they mean people's sense that they are sufficiently able to participate in political life.

We began by testing for a larger sense of efficacy: we asked people whether they agreed or disagreed with a statement that asserted that they had "little or not control over what happens" to their life.

Just less than one-third (32%) of South Africans agreed with this sentiment while a clear majority (57%) disagreed. Roughly the same distributions were also evident among Malawians, Basotho and Zambians where the average citizen tends to feel relatively efficacious about their ability to control their destinies. Zimbabweans, however, are divided almost equally on this matter with 45 percent agreeing and 41 percent disagreeing (the questions was not asked in the Namibian instrument).

Control Over Life

	Botswana	Zim	Zambia	Malawi	Lesotho	Namibia	South Africa
You feel you have little or no control over what happens to your life.							
Strongly Agree / Agree	37.9	45.4	35.8	31.4	35.1	NA	31.8
Neither Agree nor disagree	7.5	6.7	4.2	5.2	4.1	NA	10.8
Strongly Disagree / Disagree	52.8	40.6	58.3	62.4	57.1	NA	57.0

In order to get a more explicitly political sense of efficacy we then asked people whether they feel they have enough information about political affairs, can understand politics and government, and are able to speak their minds with regard to politics.

Where the average South and Southern African tended to feel they are able to control their overall lives, they do not feel nearly as able to understand politics and government affairs or to speak their minds about politics.

In South Africa, six in ten (62%) feel that they do not "have enough information about political life and the actions of government"; 22 percent disagreed. Three quarters (76%) agreed that politics and government affairs sometimes "seem so complicated" that they "cant really understand what's going on" while only one in ten (12%) disagreed. Finally, just over one half (53%) agreed that in South Africa, "you must be very careful of what you say and do with regard to politics"; 29 percent disagreed.

Political Competence

	Botswana	Zim	Zambia	Malawi	Lesotho	Namibia	South Africa
You think that you do not have enough information about political life and the actions of government.							
Strongly Agree / Agree	56.6	63.3	63.4	55.1	79.6	50.9	61.7
Neither Agree nor disagree	8.3	7.9	5.3	4.3	4.0	11.1	16.3
Strongly Disagree / Disagree	33.3	25.7	28.0	39.9	13.2	34.3	21.7
Sometimes political and government affairs seem so complicated that you can't really understand what's going on.							
Strongly Agree / Agree	66.4	62.8	73.0	65.2	77.2	54.6	75.6
Neither Agree nor disagree	8.0	8.0	5.5	3.6	4.9	14.2	12.0
Strongly Disagree / Disagree	22.5.	24.9	30.3	30.3	4.7	26.2	12.2
In this country, you must be very careful of what you say and do with regard to politics.							
Strongly Agree / Agree	49.0	59.2	52.4	32.6	72.2	48.4	53.4
Neither Agree nor disagree	13.9	6.9	4.5	6.4	5.1	14.3	15.8
Strongly Disagree / Disagree	31.4	27.6	37.8	58.8	14.4	31.2	28.8

These three items can be combined to form a reliable scale that runs from 1 to 5. Namibians and Malawians feel most competent to participate in political life and Basotho the least. However, we should remember that even the Namibian (2.95) and Malawian (2.75) averages are below the midpoint of 3, indicating that even in those countries, the average person does not feel sufficiently competent to play an active role in politics.

Citizenship Efficacy Scale

Country of Respondent	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Malawi	2.95	1170	1.0055
Namibia	2.75	1064	.9242
Botswana	2.61	1117	.9461
Zambia	2.52	1114	.9276
South Africa	2.40	2149	.7989
Zimbabwe	2.40	1114	1.1535
Lesotho	1.75	1062	1.0812
Total	2.48	8790	1.0166

Citizenship Efficacy (By Race)

	Total	Black	White	Coloured	Indian
Politics and Government Affairs Too Complicated To Understand	75.7	79.2	56.1	74.3	79.7
Do Not Have Enough Information About Political Life and Government Actions	61.7	64.4	47.2	59.2	65.4
Have To Be Careful What You Do and Say With Regard to Politics	53.4	49.9	71.4	52.5	69.0
Little Or No Control Over Life	31.8	33.8	19.3	32.4	35.2

% Agree / Strongly Agree

Efficacy of Voting and Elections

Besides their sense of their own personal competence, what do South Africans think about the efficacy of democracy's chief institutions: voting and elections? Do they feel they can make use

of democratic politics to make a positive impact on their lives? To get at this, we gave respondents two sets of paired statements.

South Africans retain a general sense of optimism about the impact of voting. Six in ten (62%) feel that they way they vote "can make things better in the future" and 36 say that no matter how they vote "it won't make things any better in the future." They also feel that the possession of political power is an important and relevant issue in their lives with 64 percent agreeing that "it is important who is in power because it can make a difference to what happens" while 33 percent say that it doesn't matter who is in power "because in the end things go on much the same."

In both instances, South Africans' levels of confidence about the positive impact of voting and elections is bested only in Malawi and Botswana, not coincidentally, the two countries that had (at the times of the respective surveys) the most competitive party systems in the region and thus the greatest possibility of change in government.

Zimbabweans and Zambians are most likely to agree that "no matter how they vote, it won't make things any better." Zimbabwean and Basotho are most likely to feel that "It doesn't really matter who is in power" because things do not change. We believe that this, similarly, reflects two facts. First of all, at the time of the survey, Zimbabweans had not come close to seeing a democratic change of power since their founding election (almost two decades). Second, as can be seen also in several other questions, many Zimbabweans did not feel that the Mugabe government had improved their lives significantly over the Smith / minority government regime, thus contributing to a feeling that life went on much the same way regardless of who controlled the government.

Efficacy of Voting

	Botswana	Zim	Zambia	Malawi	Lesotho	Namibia	South Africa
They way you vote could make things better in the future	70.7	53.1	52.8	68.2	58.0	55.8	61.8
No matter how you vote, it won't make things any better in the future	27.4	42.1	43.4	27.3	28.4	37.3	35.8

% Agree / Strongly Agree

Efficacy of Elections

	Botswana	Zim	Zambia	Malawi	Lesotho	Namibia	South Africa
It is important who is in power because it can make a difference to what happens	66.2	52.7	48.9	76.6	52.3	63.1	64.3
It doesn't really matter who is in power, because in the end things go on much the same	27.4	41.0	39.0	19.3	42.3	23.8	33.0

% Agree / Strongly Agree

While there are significant racial differences on these areas of opinion, they are much smaller than observed elsewhere. At worst, Indians respondents tend to be roughly divided on the two questions. White South Africans have an even stronger belief in the consequence of elections than black South Africans.

	Total	Black	White	Coloured	Indian
They way you vote could make things better in the future	61.8	64.6	56.2	49.7	43.7
No matter how you vote, it won't make things any better in the future	35.8	33.7	37.5	47.5	54.5

% Agree / Strongly Agree

	Total	Black	White	Coloured	Indian
It is important who is in power because it can make a difference to what happens	64.3	64.7	69.8	57.3	49.1
It doesn't really matter who is in power, because in the end things go on much the same	33.0	33.6	22.2	40.0	49.1

% Agree / Strongly Agree

Civic Participation

Now we turn our attention to several different measures of what citizens are actually doing. First of all, we look at the extent to South Africans are active at the community level. In order to measure civic activism, we asked people whether they had attended meetings of various forms of community organisations over the past year, and if so whether it was "often," "a few times," or just "once or twice."

As of July / August 2000, South Africans participated most frequently in meetings of church groups. Thirty-five percent – just over one-third - said they had done this "often" (17%) or at least "a few times" (18%). Twenty nine percent of South Africans say they had participated in meetings of a group concerned with local issues (like education, housing or rates). 27 percent had gone to meetings of local self-help groups or associations (like *stokvels* or burial societies). Twenty-six percent had attended a meeting of a group that did things for the community at least a few times. The figure drops to nine percent for a local business or farmer group. Finally, an equal nine percent said they had gone to a trade union meeting at least a few times in the previous year.

In general, South Africans' average level of participation in all these different types of groups is relatively low compared to the rest of the region. The biggest difference is in the area of participation in religious associates. Just over one-third (35%) of South Africans had participated at least a few times the previous year contrasted to almost three quarters of Zambians (73%) one half of Malawians (50%) and Zimbabweans (49%) and over four in ten Namibians (43%).

While the cross-national differences were smaller in other forms of participation there was a fairly consistent pattern. While 33 percent had become involved with a group concerned with local issues, 44 percent of Namibians had. Almost three times as many Malawians (23%) and Zimbabweans (23%) had become involved in a business or farm group as South Africans (8%). Over fifty percent more Zimbabweans (16%) had gone to at least a few trade union meetings as South Africans (9%). Only with regard to attendance in a local charitable organization or a self-help group did South African participation levels compare favourably with its neighbours.

Frequency of Organisational Civic Participation Across Southern Africa

	Botswana	Zim	Zambia	Malawi	Lesotho	Namibia	South Africa
Church group (other than religious services)	34.4	48.6	72.5	49.5	21.4	42.8	35.3
local self-help association	15.7	31.4	23.2	34.7	13.0	23.7	26.6
Group concerned with local matters such as schools, housing or rates	18.6	33.5	30.7	29.5	11.9	44.0	33.4
local commercial organisation such as a business group or farmers' association	10.9	23.0	16.1	22.8	8.2	17.1	8.4
Group that does things for the community	13.0	22.8	22.9	27.7	18.0	29.7	25.6
a trade union	10.7	15.6	6.5	3.0	6.1	7.5	9.0

Over the past year, how often have you attended meetings of a _____?
(% "Often" / "A Few Times")

Factor Analysis confirms that the responses to all these items can be combined together to create a valid and reliable summary measure of community activism. There are few national differences. The results confirm that the average South African rate of community participation is among the lowest in the region. Zimbabweans, Zambians and Malawians are the most active. The South African mean score (1.6) indicates that the average person had attended an average of only one or two meetings of any group.

Civic Participation Scale

Country of Respondent	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Zimbabwe	1.84	1125	.7128
Zambia	1.83	1138	.6974
Malawi	1.83	1161	.7281
Namibia	1.80	1072	.6502
South Africa	1.62	2145	.6213
Botswana	1.49	1127	.6416
Lesotho	1.41	1164	.6895
Total	1.68	8932	.6746

With the exception of attendance at religious group meetings, black South Africans exhibit the highest levels of civic participation within South Africa.

Frequency of Organisational Civic Participation (by Race)

	Total	Black	White	Coloured	Indian
Church group (other than religious services)	35	34	39	50	17
Local self-help association	27	33	8	7	4
Group concerned with local matters such as schools, housing or rates	33	40	13	14	15
Local commercial organisation such as a business group or farmers' association	8	10	6	1	4
Group that does things for the community	26	31	10	10	11
Trade Union	9	10	5	3	7

% saying "Often", "A few times"

Political Participation

Democratic politics affords citizens with a range of other avenues and channels, beyond voting, for participating in the system. To get at these forms of participation, we asked people whether they had taken part in four different types of political action, and if so whether it was "often" "a few times" or just "once or twice." Yet it is possible that many people who may not ever have done these things have not done so simply because they never had the reason or opportunity. Thus we also asked those who said they had never take part in a form of protest whether they "would do it if they had the chance" or whether they "would never do this."

One third of South Africans (33%) say they have attended an election rally. This is far lower than the almost three quarter of Malawians (71%) or just over one half of Namibians (54%) who say they had.

Thirty percent of South Africans say they have become involved with some group or movement organised around a local or national issue (other than an election). Yet over half of Zimbabweans (55%) and Namibians (51%) say they have done this.

Only 8 percent of South Africans have worked for a political party or candidate. In contrast, one-in-five Zimbabweans (20%) and 16 percent of Namibians have become involved in the electoral process.

Finally, seven percent of South Africans have written a letter to a newspaper. Twice as many Zimbabweans (15%) have done this.

Political Participation

	Botswana	Zimbabwe	Zambia	Malawi	Lesotho	Namibia	South Africa
Attend an election rally							
Have Done	39.5	46.6	43.2	71.2	19.0	54.0	33.1
Would Do It If I Had the Chance	30.8	22.8	25.0	12.7	33.8	20.4	31.3
Work for a political candidate or party							
Have Done	10.2	20.1	10.9	9.7	12.0	16.2	7.5
Would Do It If I Had the Chance	37.2	28.4	31.1	46.0	39.4	34.6	43.2
Participate with others to address an important problem affecting the community or nation (other than an election).							
Have Done	27.3	55.4	37.8	42.1	37.7	50.9	29.6
Would Do It If I Had the Chance	44.4	25.8	29.0	35.7	41.7	22.5	41.5
Write a letter to a newspaper							
Have Done	5.8	14.7	5.6	4.6	2.9	9.3	7.0
Would Do It If I Had the Chance	47.5	38.2	44.6	50.7	47.7	39.0	44.2

Here is a list of things that people sometimes do as citizens. For each of these, please tell me whether you have engaged in this activity or not?

Excluding contacting political and community leaders, responses to these items indicate that they reflect a common underlying dimension of political activism. Besides the citizens of Lesotho, South Africans are the least active in these forms of political participation. Malawians (largely on the strength of their attendance at election rallies) and Zimbabweans are the most participant respondents in terms of normal procedural politics. Excepting election rallies, Zimbabweans are the most likely to have actually participated in the other three activities. However, large

proportions of Malawians remain ready to participate in these actions across the board, given the chance. Batswana and Basotho are the least participant in these terms.

Political Participation Scale

Country of Respondent	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Malawi	2.41	1201	.7622
Zimbabwe	2.40	1139	.9694
Namibia	2.26	1096	.8744
Zambia	2.08	1123	.8184
Botswana	2.03	1133	.8393
South Africa	2.13	8914	.8434
Lesotho	2.01	1100	.8212
Total	2.20	6792	.8646

With the exception of writing letters to newspapers (where whites are most active), black respondents are much more active in all other forms of participation: at least two, and in some cases three times as many blacks took part in these actions in the previous twelve months.

Political Participation In South Africa (by Race)

	Total	Black	White	Coloured	Indian
Attend Election Rally	33	39	14	19	4
Address Problems Facing Community	30	35	13	12	5
Contacted Any Other Influential Person	10	11	6	6	5
Contacted Any Other Influential Person	10	11	6	6	5
Write Letter to Newspaper	7	6	13	4	0
Contacted A Government / Party Official	6	7	2	2	9

Willingness to Take Part In Various Forms of Political Participation (1997-2000)

	Total		Black		White		Coloured		Indian	
	97	00	97	00	97	00	97	00	97	00
Participate in campaign / cause (other than election)	76	74	79	76	61	51	72	59	84	39
Work for / participate in political campaign / party	66	49	71	52	47	29	52	35	51	19

1997: Actively participate in a campaign for a cause you believe in (other than an election)
2000 Participate with others to address an important problem affecting the community or nation (other than an election)
1997 Actively participate in a political election campaign
2000 Work for a political candidate or party
1997 - % who say "would definitely do this / might do this"
2000 - % who say "have done this / would do it if had the chance"

Just one-in-twenty (6%) South Africans said they had contacted a government or party official in the past year to give them their view about some problem or issue. And ten percent had made similar contact with some other influential person. Yet five times as many Namibians (30%) and almost as many Zimbabweans (29%) had made contact with a public official, and almost four

times as many Namibians (39%) had made contact with some other influential leader as had South Africans.

Contact With the State / Community Leadership

	Botswana	Zim	Zambia	Malawi	Lesotho	Namibia	South Africa
a government or political party official	8.9	29.3	21.7	9.0	13.9	30.1	6.2
Any other influential person such as a church or community leader	10.9	32.0	30.8	23.9	14.4	39.2	9.9

In the past year, have you contacted _____ about some important problem or to give them your views? IF YES Was it Just Once or Twice, A few times or Frequently.
(% "Once or Twice" / "A Few Times" / "Frequently"

The frequency with which ordinary South Africans interact with elected government (either at national, provincial, or local levels) is astonishingly low when compared with other Southern African countries.

With the exception of Malawi (which as of yet has no system of elected local government), people across the region most frequently made contact with public officials at the local level.

Three percent of South Africans told us they had made contact with an elected local councillor in the past year in order to give them their views, and another 1 percent had gone to a council meeting or hearing for that purpose. An additional 1 percent had made contact with an official from the local council for this reason. All together, five percent of the South African public had taken the initiative to contact local government to give them their view about some matter or problem.

With the exception of Malawi, this is the lowest frequency of contact with local government in the region. By comparison, 27 percent of Zimbabweans, 20 percent of Namibians, 13 percent of Zambians and even 11 percent of Basotho had done so.

0.2 percent -- that is, four out of 2,200 South African respondents – said they had made contact with an elected member of parliament. No one in the sample mentioned that they had attended any hearing or meeting of parliament or organised by an MP. In contrast, as many as 7 percent of Zimbabweans and Zambians told us they had done this. With the exception of Botswana, frequency of contact with MPs is five to seven times higher in countries with constituency representation than in the pure proportional representation systems of Namibia and South Africa.

One percent said they had contacted a political party official. This figure ranks far more favourably with other countries in the region. At most 2 percent of Namibians, Malawians, Zambians and Zimbabweans had contacted a party official in the past year.

In four countries (Zambia, Malawi, Botswana and South Africa), church leaders were the most frequently contacted form of "other" influential persons. In Zimbabwe it was some other type of community leader (this does not include traditional leaders which we coded as separate responses). Only in Lesotho and Namibia were traditional leaders the most frequently contacted persons (of either official or non official figures).

Six percent of South Africans say they contacted a church leader to give them their opinion about something. With the exception of Lesotho, this is the lowest frequency in the region.

Four percent of South Africans had made contact with some other community leader (beside a traditional leader) in the past year. In contrast, 14 percent of Malawians and 12 percent of Zimbabweans had done so.

Just 0.6 percent – or 14 respondents out of 2,200 South African respondents – said they had contacted a traditional leader, chief or headman, or gone to a traditional council meeting in order to give their opinion. Namibians (16%), Zimbabweans (12%), Malawians (11%) and Basotho (11%) were all far more likely to have taken the initiative to make contact with traditional authorities to give them their view on some problem or issue.

Type of Officials Contacted

	Botswana	Zim	Zambia	Malawi	Lesotho	Namibia	South Africa
Elected local councillor	4.6	22.0	9.7	0.2	8.2	11.7	2.6
Elected regional or provincial representative	0.1	1.0	0.9	0.2	0.8	2.5	0.1
Elected member of parliament	1.8	6.8	7.3	5.0	4.6	0.9	0.2
Local council meeting or hearing	1.1	1.8	0.7	0.2	1.9	3.8	1.2
Regional, Provincial Legislative meeting or hearing	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.6	0.4	0.0
National parliament meeting or hearing	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.3	0.0
National government hearing or meeting	0.2	0.6	0.2	0.2	0.3	3.7	0.0
Local council official	0.3	2.7	2.6	0.1	1.0	4.5	1.0
Regional, provincial official	0.2	0.9	0.4	0.1	0.4	0.4	0.3
National government official, civil servant	0.3	1.0	0.6	0.5	0.6	1.2	0.3
Political Party official	0.3	1.5	1.6	2.1	0.7	2.1	0.9

Type of "Other Influential Person" Contacted

	Botswana	Zim	Zambia	Malawi	Lesotho	Namibia	SA
Church leader, official /	7.5	9.1	24.8	13.9	5.5	12.5	5.5
Community leader /	2.4	12.4	4.8	3.1	5.4	13.5	3.9
Trade Union official /	0.4	1.0	0.6	0.4	0.7	0.8	0.3
Traditional leader /	1.9	9.1	1.9	10.1	9.5	12.9	0.3
Traditional council meeting /	0.7	2.6	0.8	0.8	1.0	3.0	0.3

Type of Officials Contacted

	Total	Black	White	Coloured	Indian
Elected local councillor	2.6	3.1	0.2	1.2	5.3
Elected regional or provincial representative	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.6	0.0
Elected member of parliament	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
Local council meeting or hearing	1.2	1.3	0.6	0.5	0.9
Regional, Provincial Legislative meeting or hearing	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
National parliament meeting or hearing	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
National government hearing or meeting	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Local council official	1.0	1.2	0.6	0.0	1.0
Regional, provincial official	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.5	0.9
National government official, civil servant	0.3	0.3	0.6	0.4	0.0
Political Party official	0.9	1.2	0.0	0.5	0.0

Type of "Other Influential Person" Contacted

	Total	Black	White	Coloured	Indian
Church leader, official /	11.1	11.7	5.9	5.4	4.6
Community leader /	6.5	6.9	3.9	1.8	0.9
Trade Union official /	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.0
Traditional leader /	6.2	6.8	0.2	0.4	0.0
Traditional council meeting /	1.3	1.4	0.2	0.0	0.0

Political Protest

Once we turn our focus of analysis to political protest, a more non-procedural way for people to become involved in political action, we find quite a different picture. With respect to this form of political behaviour, South Africans have one of the most activist profiles in the region. Unsurprisingly, Zimbabweans, South Africans, and Namibians have the three most active records of political protest. These are the three countries that have endured protracted liberation struggles against white minority rule.

We asked people whether they had *ever* taken part in four different types of protest action, and if so whether it was "often" "a few times" or just "once or twice." As with political participation, it is possible that many people who may not ever have done these things have not done so simply because they never had the reason or opportunity. Thus we also asked those who said they had never take part in a form of protest whether they "would do it if they had the chance" or whether they "would never do this."

One quarter (24%) of South Africans say they have taken part in a demonstration or protest march. Along with Zimbabwe, this is the highest rate of participation in marches and demonstrations in the region.

Eleven percent say they have taken part in a boycott of rates and services. Six percent say they have taken part in a sit-in, or disruption of government meetings or offices. And 2 percent say they have used force or violent methods, like damaging public property. On each of these three types of behaviour, only Zimbabweans and Namibians have a more activist history.

Political Protest Across Southern Africa

	Botswana	Zim	Zambia	Malawi	Lesotho	Namibia	South Africa
Attend a demonstration or protest march							
Have Done	9.6	23.3	9.1	5.9	3.4	21.3	23.9
Would Do It If I Had the Chance	27.0	24.2	20.8	26.7	24.8	22.0	29.9
Participate in a boycott of rates, services or taxes							
Have Done	3.4	15.8	3.2	2.4	0.9	13.3	11.3
Would Do It If I Had the Chance	22.4	27.2	16.9	24.3	10.4	18.5	30.4
Take part in a sit-in, disruption of government meeting or offices							
Have Done	0.9	10.4	2.1	0.9	0.9	7.2	5.9
Would Do It If I Had the Chance	12.4	22.6	10.3	15.2	7.1	15.8	25.0
Use force or violent methods (such as damaging public property)							
Have Done	0.3	6.5	1.1	0.6	1.1	3.9	2.3
Would Do It If I Had the Chance	7.3	17.7	7.4	8.9	4.2	7.0	12.3

Here are a number of different actions people might take if government were to do something they thought was wrong or harmful. For each of these, please tell me whether you have engaged in this activity or not.

The answers about participation in these four forms of protest can be combined into a valid and reliable scale. This indicates that across the four countries in question, the same type of people who were most likely to participate in one form of protest were also most likely to take part in another. The average (mean) response is to say that people have taken part in an action only once or twice. The scale scores confirm that the highest average frequency of participation in political protest are found in Zimbabwe, South Africa and then Namibia. They are lowest in Lesotho.

Political Protest Scale

Country of Respondent	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Zimbabwe	1.67	1113	.8789
South Africa	1.54	2120	.6226
Namibia	1.46	1098	.6926
Botswana	1.26	1148	.4147
Malawi	1.25	1196	.4102
Zambia	1.24	1127	.4415
Lesotho	1.17	987	.3749
Total	1.39	8789	.6054

Given the history of South Africa's liberation struggle, it is no surprise that black South Africans have the highest rates of past participation across each type of protest politics. What is also noteworthy is that with the exception of marches and demonstrations, the rates of protest among the two other racial groups oppressed under *apartheid* have much lower rates of protest participation.

While changes in the response categories limit our ability to make strict comparisons, it appears that willingness to take part in a range of protest actions has declined significantly between 1997 and 2000.

	Total		Black		White		Coloured		Indian	
	97	00	97	00	97	00	97	00	97	00
Demonstration / Protest March	55.2	40.3	59.8	41.1	33.7	23.6	52.8	48.6	49.4	37.0
Boycott Rates, Services, Taxes	44.4	30.0	45.4	30.3	36.1	21.8	48.7	49.6	51.2	31.5
Sit-Ins, Disruptions	28.3	19.4	31.2	21.1	14.9	14.0	24.1	23.5	29.3	24.0
Use Force, Violent Methods	10.8	12.0	11.8	12.2	7.4	8.7	7.6	16.8	10.9	12.0

1997 - % who say "would definitely do this / might do this"
2000 - % who say "have done this / would do it if had the chance"

Citizen Compliance

A different form of citizen action, which has the potential of taking the form of political expression, is the decision to comply or not to comply the law. And even if one's choice about compliance carries no overt political message, it certainly is a fundamental part of democratic citizenship. It also reflects on the legitimacy of government, and its ability to enforce the law.

We asked people whether they had taken part in four different types of non-compliance or fraud and if so, whether it was "often" "a few times" or just "once or twice." As with the previous scales on political participation and protest participation, it is possible that many people never took part in these actions simply because they had nor reason or opportunity, not because they chose not to. Thus, we also asked those who said they had never take part in a form of protest whether they "would do it if they had the chance" or whether they "would never do this."

It is important to note that we are not reporting actual rates of non-compliance (e.g. non payment of rates or services), but rather respondents self-reported frequency of non-compliance. Since the activities we asked about were illegal, we pointed out that other people were taking part in such actions, and reiterated to respondents at that point in the interview that their responses were confidential.

Based on self-reported rates, South Africans do not particularly stand out in terms of non-compliance and are relatively law-abiding. Namibians and Zimbabweans are consistently much more likely to say that they have taken part in such illegal actions. Three percent of South Africans told our interviewers that that had claimed government benefits to which they were not entitled, such as a pension, maintenance or unemployment payment. An additional 14 percent said they would do this if they had the chance. In contrast, 16 percent of Zimbabweans and Namibians admitted to having claimed some sort of government benefit to which they were not entitled (what, in essence, could be construed as fraud), and where an additional 10 to 15 percent said they would if they had the chance.

Three percent of South Africans said they had avoided paying income tax and another 15 percent said they would do so if they had the opportunity. However, one in ten Zimbabweans and Namibians told interviewers that they had done so with an additional 10 to 15 percent ready to take the opportunity if it presented itself.

Four percent of South Africans said they had avoided paying rates to local government, and an additional fifteen percent said they would if they could get away with it. The results from neighboring countries follow roughly the same contours, ranging from fifteen percent (in Namibia) to less than two percent (in Zambia, Lesotho and Botswana).

Finally, 4 percent of South Africans said they had obtained services such as electricity or water without paying for them. Another 14 percent say they would do this if they could. Across the region, one-in-ten Zimbabweans and Namibians say that they have obtained these services without paying for them.

Non-Compliance Across Southern Africa

	Botswana	Zim	Zambia	Malawi	Lesotho	Namibia	South Africa
Claim government benefits to which you are not entitled (like a pension, maintenance, or unemployment payment)							
Have Done	1.2	16.8	2.1	1.3	5.1	16.2	2.9
Would Do It If I Had the Chance	7.8	12.5	5.2	16.8	51.5	15.5	14.0
Avoid paying Development Levy or Property Taxes							
Have Done	1.1	12.4	2.1	5.0	1.3	15.1	4.3
Would Do It If I Had the Chance	6.7	14.9	4.9	12.0	4.8	11.8	15.0
Avoid paying income taxes							
Have Done	0.9	10.3	2.1	3.7	1.8	9.9	2.9
Would Do It If I Had the Chance	6.5	15.5	4.6	10.5	14.9	11.7	14.7
Get services like electricity or water without paying for them							
Have Done	1.1	9.7	1.9	1.7	1.1	11.1	4.4
Would Do It If I Had the Chance	7.3	13.4	4.3	6.1	16.6	19.4	13.5

We would like to remind you that your responses to this interview are confidential. Here is a list of actions ordinary people are taking in a political system. For each of these, please tell me whether you have engaged in this activity or not.

Clearly, there is a strong possibility that these results underestimate the true rate of non-compliance because people are hesitant to report illegal activities, no matter what assurances are offered by interviewers. But at very least these items do seem to measure, in a reliable and valid way, some underlying predisposition toward non-compliance that runs from "I did and I'll tell you," to "I did it but will only say I might," to "I might," to "I would never do it." When combined, the responses to these four questions create a valid and reliable five-point scale (where 1 means "never" having done these things and five means having done it "often"). This scale takes into account differences in frequency in terms of how often people have broken the law, as well as potential illegal activity. On average, Namibians and Zimbabweans are the most likely to engage in non-compliance (or at least most willing to tell interviewers about it). South Africans and Basotho are somewhere in between. Batswana, Zambians and Malawians are equally the least likely to do so. The mean South African score of 1.3 indicates that the average South African says they "would never" take part in any of these forms of illegal non-compliance.

Non-Compliance Scale (5pt scale)

Country of Respondent	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Namibia	1.60	968	.9237
Zimbabwe	1.58	1004	1.0381
Lesotho	1.33	390	.5479
South Africa	1.25	1922	.4887
Malawi	1.19	937	.5300
Zambia	1.15	887	.5262
Botswana	1.11	1061	.4317
Total	1.30	7169	.6914

Given the problems experience by municipalities and SARS over the past few years collecting state revenues, and the enduring debate about a "culture of non-compliance" in South Africa, these data may seem counter-intuitive. As mentioned above, one problem might simply be hesitance at reporting what are essentially illegal activities. This begs the question of why South Africans are more hesitant to report than Zimbabweans or Namibians.

Second, there is some evidence that there may have been a shift in norms on this matter over past three years. Again, the difference in question format and wording limits our ability to make strict comparisons. But in 1997, responding to similar questions with slightly differently worded response options, 24 percent said they "would definitely" or "might" try to obtain their services without paying if they could get away with it, 28 percent would similarly try to claim unentitled government benefits, 30 percent would try to avoid paying rates and another 30 percent would avoid paying income tax if they could (and if they had to). Now those figures are 16%, 23% and 16% respectively. To this one might reply that rather than a real change in norms, what has occurred is that it is simply less fashionable to admit these things to survey enumerators in 2000 than it was in 1997. Yet even if this were all that was at play, it would itself be a significant development.

Citizen Compliance In South Africa (1997 – 2000)

	Total		Black		White		Coloured		Indian	
	97	00	97	00	97	00	97	00	97	00
Claim Unentitled Govt Benefits	27	23	32	25	15	12	11	9	27	7
Avoid Paying Rates	32	16	32	17	34	12	29	9	39	10
Avoid Paying Income Taxes	30	16	30	17	31	11	26	10	32	13
Get Services for Free	24	16	26	17	20	10	16	11	20	8

1997 - % who say "would definitely do this / might do this"
2000 - % who say "have done this / would do it if had the chance"

Defending Democracy

In a young, fragile democracy -- such as those that exist across Southern Africa -- one of the most important behaviours that democratic citizens may be called upon to perform is to stand up

and defend their young democracy if it is under attack. Widespread citizen action at key junctures has been crucial in defending nascent democracies against authoritarian reversals in places as diverse as the Philippines and Russia (see Gibson, 1997).

Citizens – *qua* citizens -- can make their mark in this area in one of two ways. The first is to merely *have an opinion* for or against the moves of some undemocratic entrepreneur and thus help shape the climate of opinion that may discourage or promote such behaviours. Second, people can *actually do something* about this opinion from merely speaking to someone about it, contacting the media or a government official, or even joining a protest march.

Thus, the Southern African Democracy Barometer posed four scenarios of potential attempts by anti-democratic elites to limit democracy and then asked people, first, whether they would support or oppose such moves, and second, what, if anything, they think they would do about it.

Originally, the SADB research partners felt that such a scale would be much more applicable to places in the region other than South Africa that have experienced things such as government sponsored harassment of critical journalists, or threats against judges who made rulings opposed by the government. Yet while the data indicate that the average South African would, indeed, oppose potential elite attempts to limit democracy, they are the least likely to say they would oppose such actions. In the other six countries, people would be highly opposed to such anti-democratic moves, and also large segments of the public in these countries say they would actually do something about it.

Just under three quarters of South Africans (73%) say they would oppose government attempts to shut down critical media. Seven percent would support such moves. In the rest of the region, three-quarters to nine-in-ten Southern Africans say they would oppose government attempts to shut down critical news media.

Just 54 percent of South Africans say they would oppose government attempts to dismiss judges who issues rulings against the government. Seventeen percent say they would support such moves. In contrast, anywhere from three-quarters to eight-in-ten respondents in Zambia, Botswana, Lesotho and Malawi would oppose attempts to dismiss judges who hand down rulings critical of the government. Six-in-ten Namibians would also oppose such moves.

Two-thirds of South Africans (67%) would oppose attempts to ban political parties and only 8 percent would support. But in the rest of the region, the proportion runs from 70 to 90 percent.

Finally 63 percent of South Africans would oppose attempts to suspend parliament and cancel elections. Only 8 percent would support. Yet between seven and nine-in-ten respondents across the region would oppose these potential moves.

Opposition to Anti Democratic Initiatives Across Southern Africa

	Botswana	Zim	Zambia	Malawi	Lesotho	Namibia	South Africa
Shut down newspapers, or radio or television stations that were critical of it.	90.2	75.0	93.1	93.5	80.8	80.7	72.9
Dismissed judges who ruled against the government	84.8	74.3	91.6	85.2	80.6	58.5	53.5
Banned political parties	87.5	74.3	91.7	88.4	65.0	69.9	67.1
Suspended the parliament and cancelled the next elections	90.7	75.2	92.2	89.8	72.0	72.4	62.8

If the government were to take the following actions, would you support it, neither support nor oppose, or oppose it?
(% Oppose / Strongly Oppose)

These response, when combined, form a valid and reliable index of opposition to anti-democratic moves (with a five point scale where 1 means strong support for anti-democratic initiatives, and 5 means strong opposition). We have already seen that for every item, the absolute proportion of South Africans opposing these moves is lowest in the region. Taking into account differences in intensity (i.e. "oppose" versus "strongly oppose"), the scale also confirms that South Africans offer the least intense resistance to anti democratic moves, while Batswana, Zambians and Malawians are the most intensely opposed.

Opposition to Anti-Democratic Initiatives Scale

Country of Respondent	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Botswana	4.54	1068	.6342
Zambia	4.48	1132	.6622
Malawi	4.46	1178	.6935
Zimbabwe	4.31	1079	.8515
Lesotho	4.27	1009	1.0375
Namibia	4.02	991	.8180
South Africa	3.86	1852	.7388
Total	4.25	8309	.8179

In contrast to most of the items reviewed in this report, the data reveal few strong, and no consistent racial differences.

Opposition to Anti Democratic Initiatives In South Africa (by Race)

	Total	Black	White	Coloured	Indian
Shut down newspapers, or radio or television stations that were critical of it.	72.9	72.0	74.5	73.2	89.3
Dismissed judges who ruled against the government	53.5	48.9	69.8	65.3	69.7
Banned political parties	67.1	68.2	67.1	59.7	59.2
Suspended the parliament and cancelled the next elections	62.8	62.1	69.5	55.4	55.6

If the government were to take the following actions, would you support it, neither support nor oppose, or oppose it?
(% Oppose / Strongly Oppose)

However, having an opinion opposing some attempt to limit or end democracy is only a weak form of citizen defence of democracy. After we asked people about whether they would defend

or oppose each type of anti-democratic action, we then asked them "What if anything would you do about it?" The responses reveal that while the average South African is less likely to oppose anti-democratic moves than citizens elsewhere in the region, South Africa does possess what could be called a strata of "vigilant" citizens roughly comparable in size to its neighbours.

Between 25 and 30 percent of South Africans say they would remain passive in the face of such events. While Zambians and Batswana display lower levels of passivity, South Africans would be significantly more active than Zimbabwens, Malawians and Basotho.

The most likely form of action South Africans would take would simply be to speak to someone about the issue, a relatively passive form of activity. However, across the four scenarios, an average of one-fifth said they would join a protest march or demonstration.

Action In Defence of Democracy

	Botswana	Zim	Zambia	Malawi	Lesotho	Namibia	South Africa
Shut down newspapers, or radio or television stations that were critical of it.							
Do nothing	21.7	36.9	15.5	40.2	47.2	29.2	26.8
Don't know	15.1	5.3	4.5	1.7	8.2	8.4	9.2
Do Something							
* Speak to others about it /	29.3	26.1	28.1	20.4	13.6	24.8	33
* Write newspaper	7.6	9.3	7.9	6.8	9.6	8.0	8.8
* Phone radio or TV programme	3.5	3.2	3.6	3.4	4.4	11.2	7.2
* Contact government official or representative	18.1	8.1	26.4	24.8	9.8	19.9	8.4
* Join march or demonstration	19.7	21.0	16.0	11.8	8.4	11.8	22.1
Dismissed judges who ruled against the government							
Do nothing	22.9	38.9	17.1	45.9	49.4	37.0	31.1
Don't know	17.0	5.8	5.8	1.8	8.7	8.5	12.7
Do Something							
* Speak to others about it /	24.9	27.0	29.8	20.0	11.5	22.7	29.4
* Write newspaper	7.8	6.8	7.9	6.1	9.6	8.5	7.3
* Phone radio or TV programme	2.9	2.3	2.6	1.5	4.7	10.7	6.2
* Contact government official or representative	17.1	7.8	25.8	23.4	9.2	18.3	7.3
* Join march or demonstration	19.0	20.2	15.1	9.9	7.4	6.8	16.6
Banned political parties							
Do nothing	21.1	38.3	17.3	42.0	49.7	32.7	25.3
Don't know	15.6	5.9	5.1	2.2	7.8	9.0	10.9
Do Something							
Speak to others about it /	26.2	25.3	28.2	21.4	13.4	24.9	33.5
* Write newspaper	7.3	8.9	9.3	7.5	9.7	8.4	6.7
* Phone radio or TV programme	2.4	3.3	3.5	2.9	5.2	12.1	5.6
* Contact government official or representative	17.2	6.2	25.3	21.7	8.5	17.8	7.9
* Join march or demonstration	21.4	21.6	15.3	14.2	7.1	9.2	25.5
Suspended the parliament and cancelled the next elections							
Do nothing	22.0	39.1	15.9	40.6	49.8	39.1	29.3
Don't know	15.4	6.2	5.9	2.2	8.5	8.9	13.2
Do Something							
* Speak to others about it /	26.8	23.2	29.8	21.7	12.2	24.1	31.1
* Write newspaper	7.3	8.1	8.6	7.1	9.4	9.3	7.1

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* Phone radio or TV programme	3.1	4.2	3.2	3.3	4.3	12.8	6.0
* Contact government official or representative	15.7	5.8	25.5	21.8	8.2	18.7	7.4
* Join march or demonstration	21.8	23.1	16.0	13.6	7.2	12.2	20.9

All Actions Mentioned Added Together

While respondents could mention as many different actions as they wanted, we combined the first mentioned responses to each of these situations and found that it was possible to create a reliable three point scale where 1 means do nothing, 2 means don't know and 3 means do something. What is noteworthy is that Zambians, Batswana and South Africans are the most likely to take some action in the face of a threat to democracy, yet people in all three of these countries tend to be relatively less active in other forms of political participation.

Taking Action During A Threat to Democracy Scale

Country of Respondent	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Zambia	2.61	1123	.6813
Botswana	2.41	1190	.7344
South Africa	2.31	2200	.6905
Namibia	2.26	1115	.7721
Zimbabwe	2.16	1147	.8617
Malawi	2.13	1177	.8863
Lesotho	1.83	1020	.8666
Total	2.26	8972	.8040

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